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ABSTRACT

The materials in this manual are designed to help workshop leaders prepare for and present a workshop for school board members on how to contribute to improved communications between the school organization and the community. The workshop covers one process board members and superintendents can use when determining how to communicate school needs, interests, and transactions to the community, and how to encourage the community to express its own needs and interests effectively. The manual consists of six sections: an introduction; three sections on planning, presenting, and evaluating the workshop; a selection of resource materials; and a booklet for workshop participants. The discussion of planning contains information on the focus and scope of the workshop, familiarization with resource materials, workshop presentation techniques and skills, suitable grouping of participants, and equipment needed. The presentation section includes sequential descriptions of workshop activities, instructions for using participant materials and audiovisual aid, and information on leader focuses for each activity. The resource materials provided include papers on community relations and masters from which transparencies for projection at the workshop can be reproduced. (Author/PGD)

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

ED224117

Keys to School Boardsmanship

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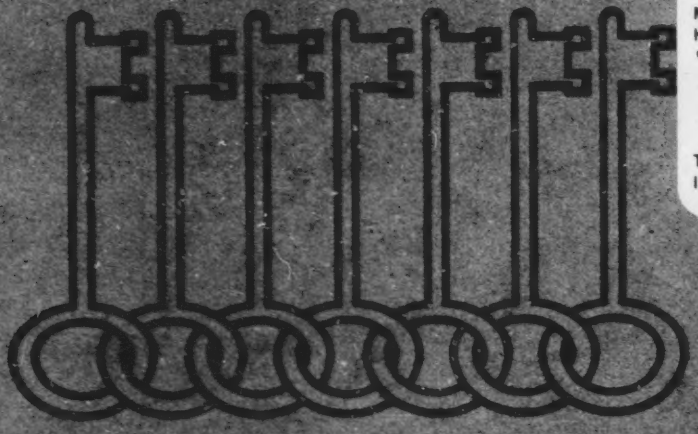

A Program of Continuing Education for School Board Members

EA 015 203

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
300 S.W. Sixth Avenue • Portland, Oregon 97204

These materials have been produced as part of "Keys to School Boardsmanship," a project to develop new materials in boardsmanship education for local school board members. It is a joint effort among:

- The Association of Alaska School Boards
- The Idaho School Boards Association
- The Montana School Boards Association
- The Oregon School Boards Association
- The Washington State School Directors' Association
- The National School Boards Association
- The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

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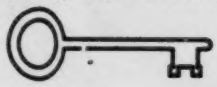
KEYS TO SCHOOL BOARDSMANSHIP



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COMMUNICATION

developed by

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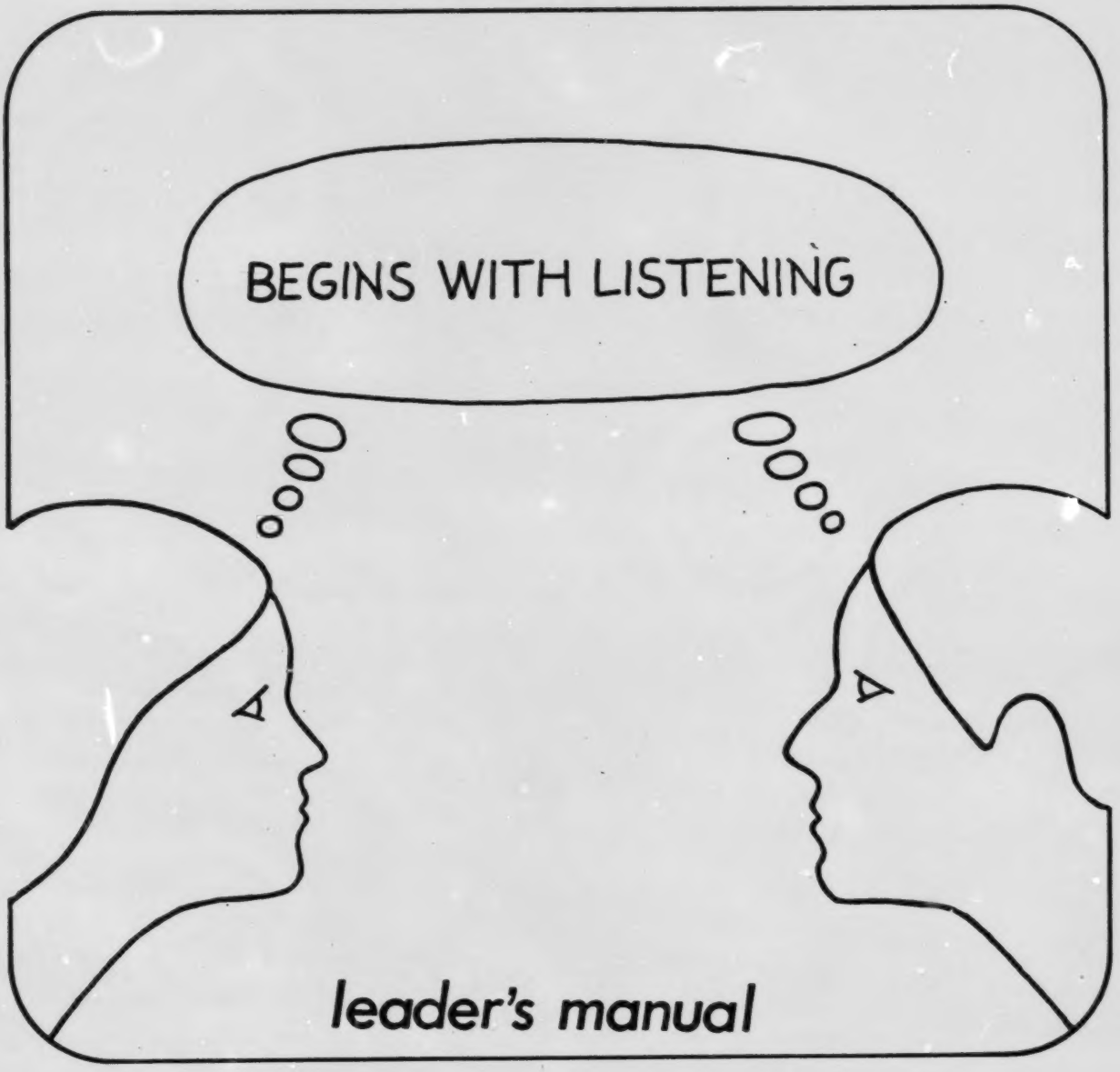


leader's manual

Prologue:

This manual is one in a series of thirteen developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) as part of the "Keys to School Boardsmanship" project.

The workshop programs resulting from the project are intended to help strengthen local school boards through continuing education.

The workshops in the series have been thoroughly tested by NWREL staff and by the staff of state school board associations in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. These programs have been found to be extremely useful as tools for strengthening continuing education services to school board members.

The "Keys to School Boardsmanship" materials are now being published and distributed by the National School Boards Association (NSBA). In addition, the NSBA is developing a national center designed to assist state associations to make the best use of the material.

Thirteen manuals in the series now available from NSBA include:

- Board/Administrator Relations
- Building Bridges: School Board Political Roles
- Communicating with the Community
- Conflict: Alternatives to Blowing a Fuse
- Effective School Board Meetings
- The Educational Management Team
- Policy Development
- Policy is Power
- Program Evaluation: School Board Roles
- What Do School Boards Do?
- School Board Self-Assessment
- School Improvement: A Tune the School Board Can Play
- Teamwork: The Board and Superintendent in Action

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Rationale:

The communications required of a management team (board, superintendent and administrative staff) must be a coherent, visible and consistent system for handling the flow of information about what is done in the name of education. The needs of the school and the needs of the community must be an integral part of the communications function. How do schools go about the business of communicating?

Between the asking of a question and the giving of an answer, there must be a process of finding out. This workshop outlines one process board members and superintendents may use in deciding how to act in response to two basic questions:

1. How can a board best communicate to the community the needs, interests and transactions of the schools?

2. How can the needs and interests of the community be communicated most effectively to the schools?

Out of the process should come a system for communicating with anyone who has a need to know. These are questions about action, making the public presence felt in the school system and making the educational presence felt in the community without compromising either genuine public need or the integrity of the schools.

Goals and Objectives

The Communicating With the Community workshop is a 90-minute to two-hour program designed to introduce school directors to the communication links in the school organization and in the community. The workshop emphasizes each school board member's unique and personal contribution.

The goal of the Communicating with the Community workshop is to demonstrate that even though communication is a complex process there are many opportunities for a school board member to make an individual contribution.

The objectives of the workshop are as follows:

1. The participants' attitudes about their individual ability to have an effect on the community communication process will improve.

2. The participants' attitudes about the need to have a planned and evaluated communication process will become more positive.

3. The participants will increase their background knowledge of the research in the community communication process.

4. Each participant will go back to his/her district with a plan that he/she can as an individual put into action.

Organization of the Leader's Guide

The Leader's Guide contains the basic directions and material you will need to plan the workshop. Any additional information or experiences that you can bring to the workshop will serve to strengthen your presentation.

Section 2: Planning the Workshop

Section 2 contains information about preparations the leader needs to make before presenting the workshop. Included are hints and suggestions about:

- Focus and scope
- Objectives and time estimates
- Becoming familiar with the material
- Reviewing Section 3
- Skills needed
- Organizing for learning
- Groupings of participants
- Use of transparencies
- Warnings
- Equipment needed

Section 3: Presenting the Workshop

Section 3 includes a step-by-step description of the workshop procedures, along with the time allocations and the required resources. In addition, you will find:

- A sequence of workshop activities
- Specific instructions and references to participant materials and audio and visual aids
- A leader focus for each workshop activity
- Helpful hints about workshop activities

Section 4: Evaluating the Workshop

Section 4 contains a procedure for evaluating the workshop. Included are:

- A rationale for evaluating the workshop

- o The background of the development and testing of this workshop
- o A sample workshop evaluation form

Section 5: Resources

This section contains reading material which the leader will need to become familiar with before presenting the workshop. Included in this section are:

- o Concept papers
- o Background reading and references
- o Further explanation of ideas developed in the workshop

Section 6: Participant Materials

SECTION 2: PLANNING THE WORKSHOP

Focus and Scope

The Communicating With the Community workshop is composed of eight instructional activities. Each activity serves as a vehicle to help the participants achieve one or more of the workshop objectives. It is possible to redesign the workshop to emphasize specific objectives or to meet given time requirements; however, a word of caution is in order. The workshop will be less successful if in the redesigning the leader eliminates or limits the time allocated for group discussions, interactions and simulations. This program should not be turned into a lecture because of time limitations.

Time Estimates and Activities

The following outline presents the activities and the approximate time needed for each.

Total Time: 2 hrs., 35 min.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Time	Activity	
25 minutes	Activity 1:	NSBA Poll and Phi Delta Kappa Poll
5 minutes	Activity 2:	Introduction and Objectives
10 minutes	Activity 3:	Leader Lecture--Communication is a Two-Way Process
35 minutes	Activity 4:	Communicators
20 minutes	Activity 5:	Leader Lecture--Transparencies
20 minutes	Activity 6:	Communications Analysis
30 minutes	Activity 7:	Planning Goal
10 minutes	Activity 8:	Evaluation

Becoming Familiar With the Materials

This workshop has been designed around a very specific notion about the school board's role in communicating with the community. The papers presented in Section 5 of this notebook were developed to provide the leader with the background, research and theory upon which this workshop is built. They do not represent the last word on the subject, and any additional research and reading that the leader can bring to the subject will strengthen the presentation.

Reviewing Section 3, Presenting the Workshop

Section 3 of the Leader's Guide is a step-by-step outline for presenting the workshop. There are a number of "cues" that have been used to assist you in the presentation. These are as follows:

- Activity

  Each unit of instruction is identified by an activity number and title, both of which are underlined, i.e., Activity 2: Introduction and Objectives. Each activity stands as a unique unit of learning with its own objectives, participant activities and basis of knowledge. The various activities are related in that they are all a part of a larger common concept, in this case, communicating with the community. (See Figure 1a.)

- Leader Focus

  Immediately underneath the activity number and name there is a heading, Leader Focus, that is also underlined. The Leader Focus provides the leader with a "mind set," a "feeling," an "attitude" or an "anticipatory set" that the leader should attempt to establish in this unit of instruction. The Leader Focus might be defined as the "affective" objective for the activity. (See Figure 1b.)

- Time

  The total time required for each activity will be located at the top left hand column of the first page of the activity. Additional divisions of time within the activity will also be noted in the left hand column. (See Figure 1c.)

- Materials

  The right hand column of each page will list the materials, transparencies, workbook references or other activities for instruction that need to be brought to the attention of the leader. The references will be noted in the right hand column next to the appropriate point of instruction. (See Figure 1d.)

  The middle section will use three cues:

  - Leader Instructions
    - Subpoints
  - Leader Lecture
    - Subpoints
  - Capitalized Words
    - Subpoints

- Leader Instructions

  The cue, Leader Instructions, alerts you, the workshop leader, to something you must do, say or cause to happen. Each of the following bulleted points "o" (see Figure 1e) are additional sequential cues.

- Leader Lecture

  The cue, Leader Lecture, alerts you that at this point in the workshop you are expected to provide a knowledge base or lecture about a given subject. The main points in the lecture will be outlined in the following paragraphs until you reach a new cue. You will also find in Section 5, Resources, papers that will provide additional background for the lecture. The leader is expected to make the main points in his/her own language or words. Do not read the lecture. (See Fig 1f.)

- Capitalized Words

  The cue of CAPITALIZED WORDS within the general framework of the text alerts the leader to the advisability of reading the exact words to the participants. The exact words in this case will help direct all the participants through the planned learning activity. (See Figure 1g.)

- The cue "--" is used to alert the leader to subpoints that may be used to add to or clarify a thought or statement (see Figure 1h).

- "Helpful Hints" is a cue that will appear at the end of some activities. Its intent is to cue the leader into something that will help make the workshop more successful (see Figure 1i).

- A solid line across the entire page will be used to indicate the end of the activity (see below and Figure 1j).

Figure 1 on the following page is a visualization of what might occur in one unit of instruction.

FIGURE 1

TIME			MATERIALS (d)
(c)			
Total Time: 30 min.	Activity 2: Introduction and Objectives (a)		
	Leader Focus: (b)		
			(d)
5 min.	o Leader Instructions:	(e)	Trans. CC 1
	o	(e)	
	o	(e)	
	— (subpoints)	(h)	d)
	— (subpoints)	(h)	Workbook Page 2
	(g)		
20 min.	o Lecturette:	(f)	
	o	(f)	
	o Ask them, IF THE SCHOOL BOARD IS IN CHARGE, WHY DON'T YOU DO IT?	(g)	
	— (subpoints)	(h)	

(i)

Helpful Hint: Move this section very fast...

(j)

Skills Needed for the Workshops

Before you make a decision to use these materials, you might take a few minutes and think through four interrelated decisions you should consciously make. All workshop leaders or teachers make the same decisions. The only difference is that a few understand they are making the decision, and the others do it by the "seat of their pants," or as Madeline Hunter says, "like egg on a wall you may or may not hit the spot." The decisions are: first, what are the needs of the participants; second, how much time do you have to work with the participants (one time only for one hour, several times for one hour, one time for four hours, etc); third, what extent of knowledge do the materials represent; and fourth, what are your skills in workshop leadership and competencies in the subject matter?

Participant Needs

In any workshop the participants will come to the program with a variety of needs, beliefs and styles. Most adults learn best about that which they can immediately use. However, within that statement there is a range of participants; there is a group that just wants to learn about the idea, still another group that wants to develop skills and a third group that wants to immediately apply the information. Of course, it takes less time to expose a person to an idea, more time to teach participants a skill, and even more time for them to learn how to apply and use the skill.

At the same time, many participants come to a conference solely for the opportunity to socialize, discuss current issues and to strengthen and enlarge their interactions and acquaintance with other school board members. The materials in this workshop were designed to meet these "inclusion" and "belongingness" needs through controlled small group discussions and interactions. The word "controlled" is used because these same adults have a need to appear to be in control, and at the same time, they want the workshop to be in control, and be of value and present a worthwhile learning experience.

Small group interactions are an important foundation of the design because they also encourage "feedback." Adults need the opportunity to apply and try out new knowledge. Adults need to know where they stand. They need an opportunity to test new ideas and to make mistakes. The small groups allow the freedom and create the control needed to reinforce described learning outcomes and to help mistakes become valuable learning opportunities.

The use of small groups provides a balance between the "expert" workshop leader and the "experience-based" school board member. The small groups create an opportunity for the school board member to test his/her experiences with the ideas of the presenter.

Any attempt to reduce the small group interactions in this workshop in order to "give more information" will surely "gut" the basis of the design and ignore the needs of the participants.

Time

The critical element in learning is time. The biggest mistake you can make is to attempt to build skills or force technical application of knowledge without enough time. Time relates to learning. You must relate the time available to the needs of the participants. The critical decision is whether you have enough time to meet the participants' needs and the objectives. A workshop designed to develop skill will take more time than one designed to expose the participants to an idea.

Level of Materials

The research and development of the concepts and materials in this workshop centered on three levels. The first level was identified as the "introduction level." This level was defined as representing enough of the generalized concepts in the subject area to present a current overview of the subject matter. The second level was identified as skill building, which was described as representing the basic skills in the subject matter. Finally, the third level was identified as the technical assistance level, representing an expansion of the basic skills to include application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills.

The materials in this workshop were developed to be used at an exposure or skill building level. The skills that are represented in the materials are specific and by no means represent a complete view of the knowledge on the subject. If the workshop leader or association representative is expected to work at a technical assistance level with an individual school district, he/she would surely be expected to bring additional knowledge and skills to the experience.

Leader Knowledge and Skill

A leader with a minimum amount of skill and knowledge should be able to present the workshop at both an introduction and skill building level by following the suggested steps in the Leader's Guide. In this case, you should stay very close to the suggested outline. After presenting the workshop several times, you may then be ready to create your own choices within the materials. If, on the other hand, you are an experienced workshop leader with an extensive knowledge in the subject area, the materials in the Leader's Guide may well serve only as a reference or guide. In this case, you may choose to alter the material to meet your own style or workshop objectives.

The concept papers and other material in the reference section of this Leader's Guide provide a ready reference for the growing leader who wishes to expand beyond the structured material. Just about any material including the most complex mathematical problems can be delivered with a structured, mechanical knowledge level approach. The growing, creative workshop leader will move to a higher level of understanding--application, analysis, analysis of relationships and analysis of organizational principles. At this point, the leader will be in a better position to help individual school boards on a technical assistance level.

The question for the leader is, are you going to throw egg at the wall or are you going to practice what you preach--quality workshop leadership and quality representation for local control?

In any case, all workshop leaders are advised to review all the material, the transparencies and the workshop exercises before making the first presentation in public.

Workshop Difficulty

The Communicating With the Community workshop is a straight forward, easy to present workshop. The workshop works well at both an introductory and skill building level. A leader with minimum workshop skills and minimum knowledge in the subject matter should be successful in presenting this workshop.

Organizing for Learning

The Communicating with the Community workshop is designed to bring together the personal experiences of the participants with the new experiences and information presented in the workshop. Consequently, the most effective way to use the materials and to organize the workshop is to create an environment that facilitates interaction of the participants with the new information. Conversely, the least effective way to use the materials is to lecture to the participants. As a workshop leader, you should have some notion about the learning theory upon which this program is constructed. A concept paper on this subject is included in the resources section of this notebook.

The most appropriate arrangement for the room is one with tables to accommodate seven to ten people organized in such a manner that all the participants can see a central projection area.

If small group arrangements are not possible, attempt to provide for arrangements where the people can move around for worksessions.

As workshop leader, you are encouraged to adjust, add or remove parts of this workshop to meet your style and the participants' needs. It won't be yours until you change it.

Depending upon the workshop leader's goals, the groups can be either organized around "home groups" or "stranger groups."

Home groups (made up of persons from the same district who probably know one another well) give the participants an opportunity to use live, meaningful examples from their own district. However, it limits the inclusion of new ideas, limits workshop communication, and allows the typical dominating superintendent or board member to continue to dominate.

Stranger groups (made up of persons from different districts who do not know one another well) provide an opportunity to increase communication between school boards, which tends to facilitate sharing new ideas. This, of course, may be good or bad. The stranger groups do allow board members to "rehearse" new roles without being as self-conscious or threatened.

Use of Transparencies

Transparencies in this workshop serve a rather unique function. The transparencies serve the same function for the workshop leader as "cue" cards do for TV broadcasters. The transparencies have been designed to free the workshop leader from the "written page" of the Leader's Guide. The transparencies carry in an abbreviated form the main points of a lecturette or some other information that is to be provided by you. Consequently, with just a little homework, you should be in a position to display the transparency and expand the abbreviated points through a lecturette or directions. The key is to free yourself from the podium or central stage and walk around while delivering the message.

Warning: Do not attempt to deliver this program without first reviewing and coordinating the transparencies with the various activities in Section 3 of the workshop.

Do not use the program in a structured lecture hall where participant interaction is restricted. The exercises and program are designed for interaction, not a lecture.

Equipment and Materials Needed

- Overhead projector and extra bulb
- Transparency pens
- Screen
- Newsprint paper
- Marking pens
- Masking tape
- Two colors self-adhesive 3/4 inch colored circles (Avery). You will need two of each color for each participant. The circles will serve as the "tokens" in Activity 4.
- One workbook for each person
- Extra copies of Exercise 2

SECTION 3: PRESENTING THE WORKSHOP

THE SCHOOL BOARD, THE COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION
AN ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 25 min.	Activity 1: NSBA Poll and Phi Delta Poll	
5 min.	Leader Focus: Activities 1a and 1b are designed to provide the participants with quick, engaging activities that focus their attention on a number of questions that might be asked of any school district or school board member. A second purpose of the exercises is to provide a basis for "feedback" to the participants when the answers to the questions are presented in the lecture section of the workshop.	
	o Hand out participant booklets, Communication Begins With Listening.	Participant Booklet
20 min.	o Leader Instructions:	
	— Tell the participants to turn to pages 5-8 of their booklets.	Participant Booklet Pages 5-8
	— Tell them to work in groups of two or three people and to answer the questions as they think the ordinary voter might respond.	Worksheets 1a and 1b
	o Share the idea that it is the questions and answers for their district that are important--not the national responses.	
	o Give them 15 minutes to complete worksheets 1a and 1b.	
	o After they have completed the worksheets, tell them you will give them the answers to the national poll later.	
	o HOWEVER, NOW I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP.	
	o Move on to Activity 2.	

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 5 min.	Activity 2: Introduction and Objectives	
	Leader Focus: The tone of the workshop should support the notion that the school board and individual school board members have a responsibility for communication within the schools and between the community and the schools. Inherent in this communication process is a need to increase community participation by increasing the exchange of information. Participation is based on information. School board members are a critical link in the participation-communication process.	
	o Leader Instructions: At this point review the workshop objectives. The objectives should be either written on newsprint, or presented, using Transparency CC 1 provided in the package. The participants may also be referred to page 4 of the participant booklet.	Newsprint or Trans. CC 1 Participant Booklet Page 4
	The workshop objectives are as follows:	
	— The participants' attitudes about their ability to have an effect on the community communication process will improve.	
	— The participants' attitudes about the need to have a planned and evaluated communication program will become more positive.	
	— The participants will increase their knowledge of the most recent research in the community communication process.	
	— Each participant will go back to his/her district with a plan for personal action.	

TIME		MATERIALS

Total Time: 10 min.

Activity 3: Lecturette--Communication is a Two-Way Process

Leader Focus: The purpose of the lecture is to raise the participants' concerns about the communication process. Hit the questions hard.

- Leader Instructions: Develop a very brief lecture from the concept paper and Brodinsky's article in the Resources section of the manual.

- Lecture: The main points to be made in the lecturette are that:

  - Communication is a two way process.

    - The school board must be in a position to communicate the community's needs to the educators.

    - The board needs to communicate the school organization's needs to the public.

  - There are a number of people in the school system who communicate with the community. Who are these people? Are they included in the district's plan?

  - The board has the responsibility to insure, inasmuch as it is possible, that a planned, organized and evaluated communications program is a part of the district's policy.

  - A basic assumption: The public, especially parents, is truly interested in what goes on in teaching and learning. What do they want to know and how do we go about telling them?

— The schools and the public are bound in a delicate relationship over matters of money. How can a board portray the district's financial needs (meaning program needs) and the superintendent's stewardship?

— Although the elected board legally represents and acts on behalf of the electorate, it has a continuous need to know whether its views reflect those of the community. How can those views be pooled and refined to become essential parts of public policy?

-- From time to time it is important for a board to assess the performance of the district and its several functions. What plans and practices are there for finding out and then telling others how we're doing?

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 35 min.	Activity 4: Communicators	
	Leader Focus: There are three purposes for this activity. The first purpose is to continue to build a feeling of "inclusion and dignity" by encouraging the participants to engage in a quick exercise that facilitates sharing among the members of the group based on their personal experiences and knowledge. The second purpose of the exercise is to identify the school organization's communicators. The third purpose is to surface the participants' preconceived ideas about the relative effectiveness of the school organization's communicators.	
5 min.	o Leader Instructions: Make sure each table has one extra copy of Worksheet 2 and one set of tokens. At this point, you might introduce Exercise 2 with the following comments.	Worksheet 2 Tokens
	o Lecturette: Even though you and your superintendent may have in mind an ideal model for handling the flow of information in your school system, consider the following exercise as an opportunity to confirm those policies and practices that now work well for you and to think about ways of putting that ideal model fully into practice.	
	— How can a board best communicate the needs, interests and services of the schools?	
	-- Who speaks for the district? Our several publics have at least ten inside sources of information about schools:	Trans. CC 2
	--- The board (individually and collectively)	
	--- The superintendent	
	--- District level administrators (assistants, directors, coordinators, supervisors, specialists)	
	--- Confidential employees (district level secretaries, clerks, receptionists, etc.)	

--- Support function managers (for business, transportation, maintenance, food service, data processing, etc.)

--- Principals

--- Other building supervisors (assistants, deans, chairpersons, coordinators, directors, etc.)

--- Teaching staff (including counseling, guidance, library, health and other specialists)

--- Classified staff (secretaries, cooks, custodians, bus drivers, etc.)

--- Students

--- Others?

-- In only specified instances does a board have control over the quality of information communicated by people in each of these categories.

--- What do children tell their parents about unusual events that take place at school or about what they learn each day?

--- How does the custodian describe to his neighbors the behavior of teachers and students?

--- What information goes out over the phone from district and school secretaries?

--- What do teachers say about the support they receive from administrators?

--- Who gets coverage regularly in the local newspaper?

o Leader Instructions: Worksheet 2 is designed to help you analyze your district's community-communication process.

5 min. o Now ask the participants to turn to pages 9 and 10 of their participant booklets. Participant Booklet Pages 9-10

TIME			MATERIALS
25 min.	o	Before starting Worksheet 2 around the table, use Transparency CC 3 and demonstrate how the worksheet and the circles are to be used as you go over the instructions in the participant booklet. Demonstrate the following points with the transparency.	Trans. CC 3
	o	Tell them that across the top of Worksheet 2, page 10, they will notice ten classes of people who generate information and impressions about the schools. — They share two things in common: —- They are <u>inside</u> the system (as managers, employees, or clients) and they report to people outside the system. —— They give the public information on behalf of the district, accurate or not, and whether we want them to or not.	
	o	Along with this worksheet, each group of participants should be given control of two tokens per person.	Avery Tokens
	o	Each person is to <u>spend</u> only one token and then pass the worksheet on to the next person.	
	o	Each person is to spend his/her <u>communications resources token</u> where he/she thinks it does the most good in the district.	
	o	Each person places a token in the column he/she identifies as "preferred communicator" and briefly explains why that choice was made, then passes the worksheet on to the next person.	
	o	Worksheet 2 should be passed around to each group member twice. In other words, each group member should have two opportunities to rate the relative importance of the communicators.	

TIME	MATERIALS

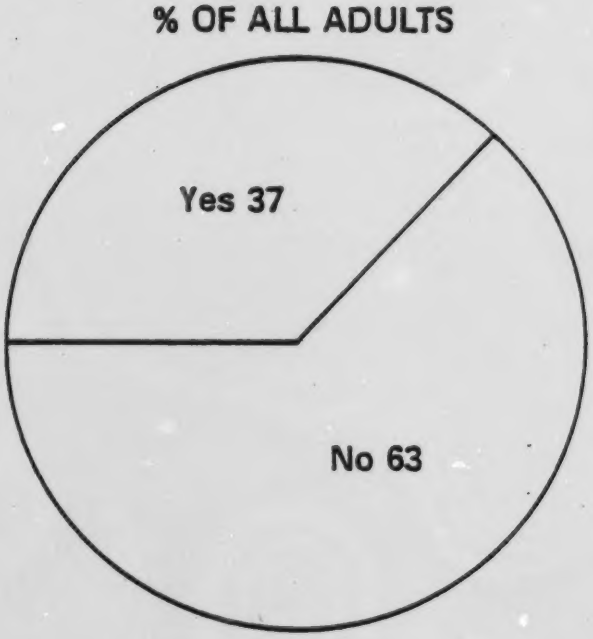
- Encourage free, open sharing of ideas and experiences at each table. As leader, you should not allow yourself to be put in the position of answering the concerns of a few at the expense of the whole group. If there are individual questions or concerns, go to the individual to respond.

- After the worksheet has gone around to each group member twice, STOP the discussion.

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 40 min.	Activity 5: Leader Lecture--Transparencies	
	Leader Focus: The purpose of the lecture is to give the participants information about the research on the communication processes.	
5 min.	o Leader Instructions: After you have stopped the circulation of Worksheet 2, tell the groups that there is some information you would like to share with them before they go any further. The lecture and the transparencies are divided into two groups. The first group of transparencies presents information about the public's perception of the school board. The second group of transparencies presents information about the public's perception of the schools and how they get information about the schools.	
	o Inform the workshop participants that the transparencies they are about to see represent the national responses to the same questions on their Worksheets 1A and 1B.	
	o Have the participants follow along to see how close their answers match the national sample.	
	o Tell the participants they have copies of the transparencies on pages 11-15 of their booklets.	
20 min.	o Now share the transparencies and information. During the lecture allow some time for questions and discussion.	Trans. CC 4 to CC 21
	(Note that some of the copies of the transparencies in the leader's guide have explanations on them for the leader to use. The explanations do not appear on the transparencies nor do the explanations appear on the copies of the transparencies that are in the participants' workbook. Remember this activity continues on page 34 of this Leader's Guide.)	

The People Look at their School Boards

Can you name at least one action taken by this district's school board in the past year or so?



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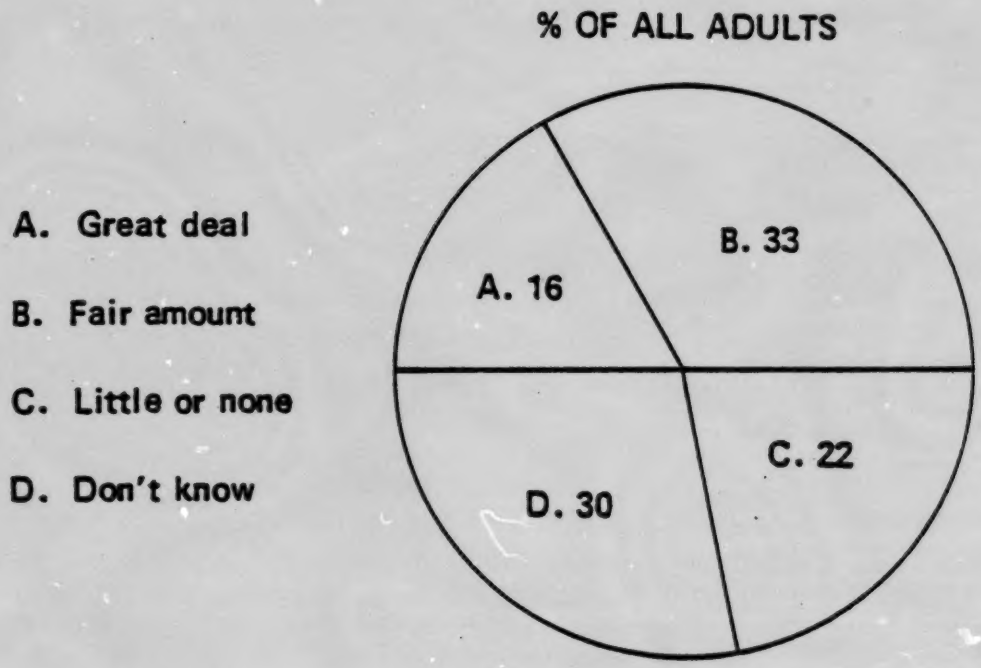
The People Look at their School Boards

How much effort does the school board in this district make to keep parents and other interested citizens informed of its activities?



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The People Look at their School Boards

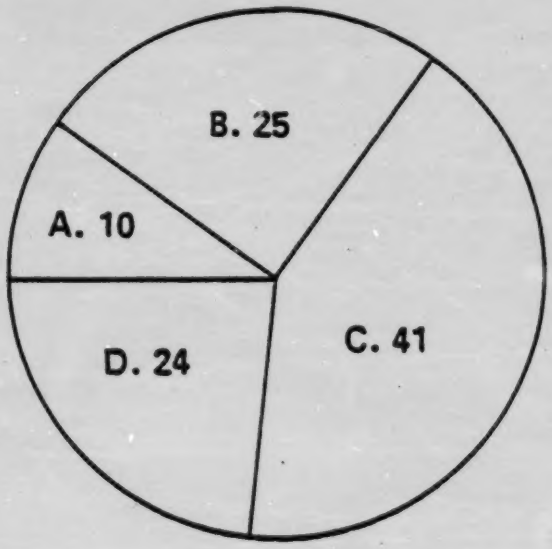
Suppose you were to disagree with a decision made by this district's school board or school administration. In such a case, how likely do you think it is that the school board would seriously consider an appeal to reconsider that decision?

A. Very likely

B. Fairly likely

C. Not too or not at all likely

D. Don't know



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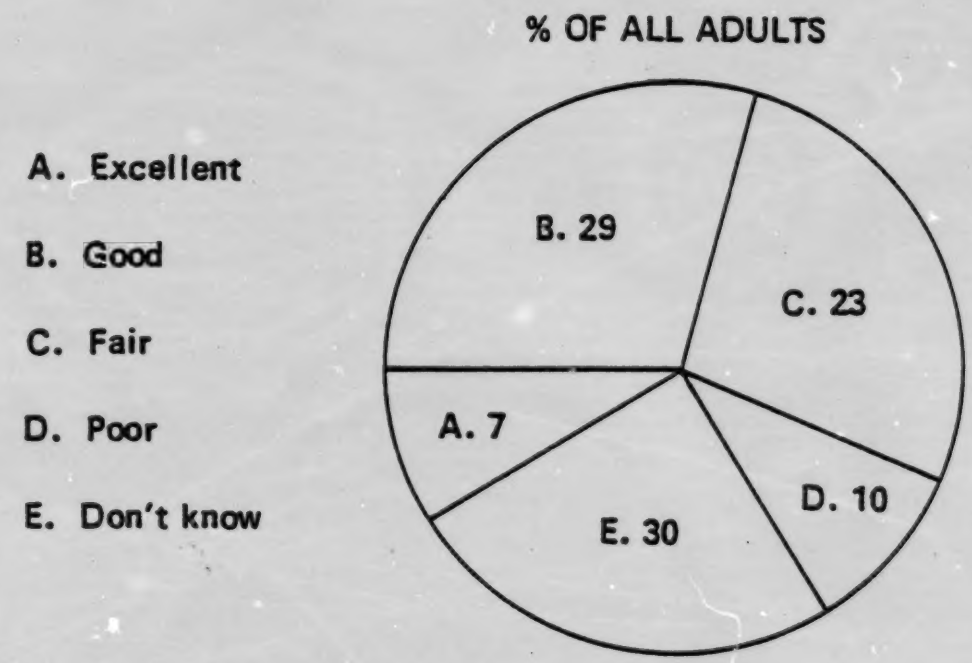
The People Look at their School Boards

In your opinion, how good a job does the school board in this district do when it comes to representing the views and opinions of people like yourself?



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The People Look at their School Boards

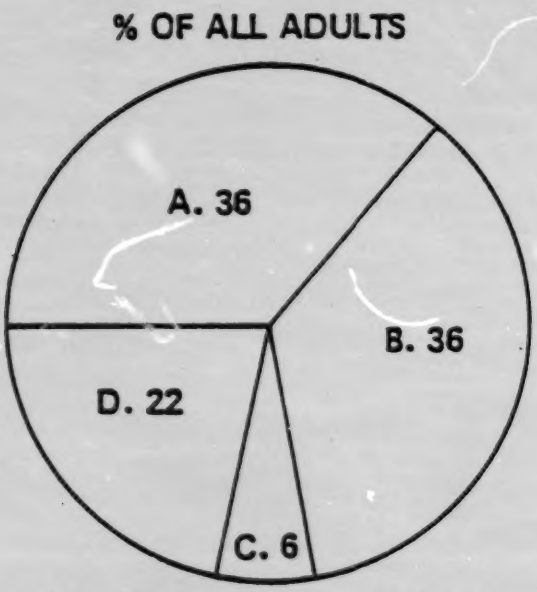
What is the role of the school board in this district?

A. Sets overall policies and goals and also runs the schools

B. Sets overall policies and goals but does not actually run the schools

C. Gives advice only with no real power of its own

D. Don't know



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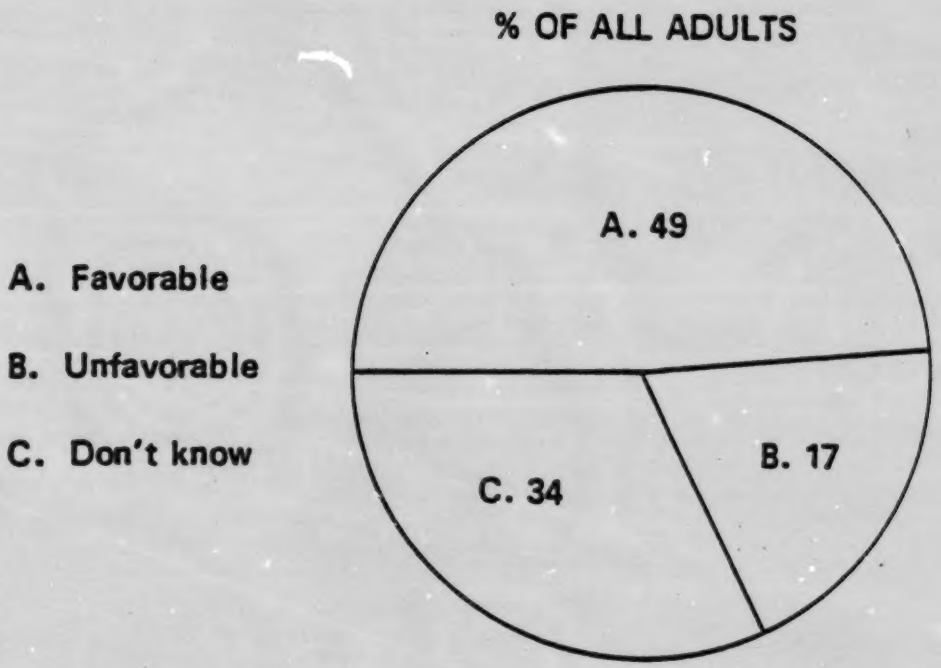
The People Look at their School Boards

Overall rating of local school boards.



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The People Look at their School Boards

Those groups most knowledgeable, supportive, or active regarding school boards:

Parents of public school children

College educated people

Residents of households with employed head of household

People aged 35-49

Residents of small communities

People served by elected boards

Midwesterners

Men

Those groups least knowledgeable, supportive, or active regarding school boards.

Non-parents of public school children

Grade school educated people

Residents of non-labor-force households

People aged 50 and older

Residents of large communities

Westerners

Women

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The People Look at their School Boards

How are you most likely to find out about this district's school board's activities?

	% OF ALL ADULTS
Newspaper, TV, radio	60
Friends, neighbors	32
School board newsletter	22
PTA, other parent groups	17
Your children's comments and reports	17
Attending school board meetings	11
Other children's comments and reports	8
Other	1
Don't know	11

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PROBLEMS OF SCHOOLS

	Public School Parents (%)	National Totals (%)
Lack of Discipline	26	26
Use of Drugs	12	14
Poor Curriculum	10	11
Integration	11	10
Need Good Teachers	7	6

The question was, "What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal?"

Discipline continues to be cited most often, by approximately one in four persons, when people are asked to name the major problems facing the public schools in their own communities. As was the case last year, second place goes to the "use of dope and drugs." Named in third place is "poor curriculum and poor standards."

Using such an "open" question permits persons interviewed to cite any problems that come to mind without benefit of a list. In fact, they can name as many as they wish. This question approach permits any new problems that may arise in any part of the nation to find their way onto the list.

The list of problems, as named by the public this year, remains much the same as last year with no significant changes.

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SEVEN YEAR RATING OF SCHOOLS

	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974
A	10	8	9	11	13	13	18
B	25	26	27	26	29	30	30
C	29	30	30	28	28	28	21
D	12	11	11	11	10	9	6
FAIL	6	7	8	5	6	7	5
DON'T KNOW	18	15	19	14	13	20	

The question that has been asked yearly since 1974 reads as follows:

> "Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in this community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here—A, B, C, D, or FAIL?"

Another slight drop has been registered in the public's rating of the public schools since the 1978 survey. This year a total of 34 percent gave the public schools a rating of A or B. Last year the comparable figure was 36 percent. However, the percentage who give the public schools either a D or Fail rating this year is 18 percent; last year it was 19 percent.

When sampling and statistical factors are taken into account, it can be concluded that there has been no significant change in the public's views during the last year. Moreover, it is likely that the downward trend recorded in the years since this question was initiated in 1974 may have come to an end. This hypothesis, of course, can only be determined by future surveys.

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RATINGS OF SCHOOLS

Grade	National Totals (%)	Those Who Have Attended School Affair (%)
A	8	11
B	26	41
C	30	35
D	11	7
F	7	2
No Answer	18	2

Analysis of the data by other groups comprising the adult population suggests the following conclusions, based upon this study and previous studies:

- The public schools are held in lowest esteem by blacks living in the central cities of the North.
- Younger adults are more critical of the schools than are their elders.
- Better-educated citizens give the schools lower ratings than the more poorly educated.
- Public schools are held in highest esteem by residents of small towns and rural communities.
- Southern blacks rate their public schools higher than Northern blacks.
- Persons living in the West give their public schools a lower rating than persons living in other major areas of the nation.

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Students	56	35	43
Newspapers	33	42	38
School Board/Faculty	45	24	33
Parents of Students	35	31	33
Other Adults	22	24	23

The question is, "What are the sources of information you use to judge the quality of schools in your community; that is, where do you get your information about the schools?"

For the general public, the best source of information about the public schools in their communities is the students themselves. Of the media, the best source of information is clearly the newspapers. The broadcast media--radio and television--are cited by only half as many.

Parents of students rank second as a source of information, with teachers and school board receiving the same number of mentions. What the survey findings seem to indicate, therefore, is that attitudes about the quality of the local schools are based upon information gained from many sources: the firsthand experience of students and teachers and from other parents, as well as the media of communication, especially newspapers.

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Word of Mouth	98	58	70
Local Newspaper	33	38	37
School Publications	12	5	7
Local Radio	3	7	5

"What is your best source of information about the schools?"

The local newspaper is still the best single source of information about the local schools. The other major media—television and radio—have improved their coverage of school news, but the local newspaper still has a large advantage, according to those interviewed in the 1979 survey.

Information about the schools comes from many sources besides the media, such as children now in school, neighbors, school meetings, school personnel, and one's own personal involvement in school activities.

As information sources, these are fully as important as the news media.

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WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOLS?

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Yes	64	45	54
No	31	44	38

To discover the interest of the different groups in the schools, the present survey included this question: "Would you like to know more about the schools in this community?"

Parents of children in the public schools and in parochial/private schools would like to have more information about the schools in the community. Current journalistic practice in most parts of the nation is to give preference to "hard" news, that is, to events or happenings that usually relate to vandalism, racial troubles, discipline problems, protests, teacher strikes, and similar news, which most laymen would describe as "bad" news.

In some cities reporters make a serious effort to find good news. The interest of parents, however, is in information which probably fits neither category but which enables them to make better judgments about the schools and the education of their children. Newsletters from the school may be the only way to supply this need.

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IF YES, WHAT??

- **Curriculum**
- **Qualification of Teachers**
- **Current Teaching Methods**
- **About Administration**
- **Discipline**
- **Finance**
- **Extracurricular activities**
- **Academic Ratings**

The people who answered "yes" to the question, "Would you like to know more about the schools in this community?" were then asked, "What kind of information would be of particular interest to you?" The responses, in order of frequency, were curriculum, qualification of teachers, current teaching methods, administration, discipline, finance, extracurricular activities, and academic ratings.

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HOW CAN SCHOOLS EARN AN A

Improve Teachers	23%
Increase Discipline	20%
Set Standards	17%
Individual Attention	16%
Three R's	12%

After respondents in the present study rated the public schools in their community, they were then asked, "In your opinion, what are the main things a school has to do before it can earn an A?"

There is general agreement on the seven steps listed below, in order of mention:

1. Improve the quality of teachers (23%)
2. Increase discipline (20%)
3. Set higher standards (17%)
4. Give students more individual attention (16%)
5. Put more emphasis on the basics—the three Rs (12%)
6. Better management and direction of schools (7%)
7. Establish closer relations with parents (6%)

Among the other suggestions mentioned are: update the curriculum; have smaller classes; eliminate drugs and alcohol, teach more life skills, and upgrade school facilities.

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WAYS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC RESPECT FOR THE SCHOOLS

- Lectures
- Meetings
- Social Events

The question was, "Have you attended any lecture, meeting or social occasion in any local school building during the school year?"

Reports of the findings in this series of surveys have frequently pointed out that the persons who are most familiar with the public schools--parents whose children are now enrolled in these schools--hold the public schools in greater esteem than those persons less familiar with them. Further evidence that greater involvement and familiarity with the public schools result in a more favorable attitude is to be found in the ratings given the schools by those persons who have attended a lecture, meeting or social occasion in any local school building during the past year.

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ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL FUNCTION

	YES	NO	CAN'T RECALL
1979	33	64	3
1969	37	59	4

The question asked in 1969 and 1979 was, "Have you attended any lecture, meeting or social occasion in any local school building during the last year?"

Although there has been much discussion in education circles regarding greater citizen involvement in the public schools, and greater use by citizens of public school buildings, survey evidence indicates that little progress has been made during the last ten years. When a question from the 1969 survey was repeated in the present survey, the results indicate that no greater number of adults are now attending lectures, meetings or social occasions in the local schools than in the past.

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PARENTS SHOULD MEET WITH TEACHERS TO EXAMINE GRADES, TEST SCORES

	Public School Parents (%)	National (%)
Yes	83	84
No	14	11
Don't Know	3	5

One of the complaints that parents voice is that the school does not keep them sufficiently well informed about the progress of their children or give them enough guidance as to what they, as parents, can do at home to help their children in school.

One of the most successful efforts to keep in close touch with parents is the plan worked out by Superintendent Billy Reagan of the Houston Independent School District. His work in Houston gave rise to the following question asked in the present survey:

> "In your opinion, should or should not parents be asked to meet with school personnel before each new school semester to examine the grades, test scores, and career goals for each child and to work out a program to be followed both in school and at home?"

Wide approval for this suggestion was found throughout the nation, as the figures reveal.

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PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS (1980)

	Great Deal (%)	Fair Amount (%)	Very Little (%)
Church	42	40	15
Public Schools	28	46	20
Courts	19	45	28
Local Government	19	51	23
State Government	17	52	24
Federal Government	14	47	31
Labor Unions	17	38	30
Big Business	13	42	36

"How much confidence do you have in these American institutions to serve the public needs: a great deal, a fair amount, or very little?"

To shed light on how the public schools stand in public respect when compared with other American institutions, a question was included in this year's survey asking respondents how much confidence they have—"a great deal," "a fair amount," or "very little"—in several institutions. If respondents answered "none" or were "undecided," this was also recorded.

The public schools do well in such a comparison of institutions, ranking second only to "the church, or organized religion."

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TIME		MATERIALS
	o Leader Instructions: After you have finished sharing the transparencies ending on page 34 of this section, you may wish to make a few summary remarks or ask a few summary questions; for example:	
	-- Where do the people get their information about school boards?	
	-- What is the best source for parents of information about the schools?	
	-- Does your school district have a plan to speak to each of these concerns?	
10 min.	o After the lecturette is completed, have the groups re-examine the values they placed on the communicators on Worksheet 2.	
	o Ask the participants if they are still content with their answers in light of the information presented in the transparencies.	
	o Tell the groups they have about 10 minutes to adjust their worksheet if they wish.	
	o Pass out different colored circles to be used for adjustments. Remind them that copies of the research and transparencies are in their workbook. Tell the groups they have 10 minutes to:	Colored Tokens
	-- Change the group worksheet if they wish. Any member of the group may suggest a new category of communicators or move a token to a new column. A reason must be given for an addition or a change which should be discussed and approved by the group.	
	-- If a token is to be moved, cross out the one to be moved and place the new token in the appropriate column. Use a different colored token for this process and number the token to indicate its value.	
	— When no further moves are proposed and the group is satisfied that the resources are properly allocated, or reallocated, the group should total the number of tokens in each column.	

TIME		MATERIALS
	o Move around and observe the groups' work. The time for this activity should be adjusted according to the needs of the workshop.	
	o Next, have each of the small groups share with the large group the number of tokens they have in each column.	
	o Encourage each group to give a report of its findings to the large group. Allow for questions and interaction.	
	o Keep track of each group's report on Transparency CC 3 by listing the adjusted values for each column as they are reported by each group. This will allow the large group to get a view of the total adjusted perceptions of the group. Encourage large group sharing.	Trans. CC 3
5 min.	o Before moving on to the next exercise, it may be helpful to make some summary remarks about the groups' findings. — Ask for sharing from the group. — Attempt to elicit responses to the questions: "What did you learn?" "Who are our most effective communicators?" "How can your district improve?"	
	o Allow sharing to go on as long as it is valuable—<u>don't let it drag</u>.	

<u>Helpful Hint</u>: Many times people will ask you the date that these surveys were completed, or they will challenge their value because they are several years old. Tell them the important issue in this case is, <u>do they know the answer to these questions for their district</u>? Tell them they may want to conduct a survey to find out.

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 50 min.	Activity 6: Communications Analysis	
	Leader Focus: The purpose of this exercise is to help the participants analyze the communications process in their own districts.	
	o Leader Instructions: Have participants turn to Worksheet 3 on pages 16 and 17 in the workbook. Read the directions with the group and at the same time use Transparency CC 22 to demonstrate how they are to complete the worksheet.	Participant Booklet Pages 16-17 Trans. CC 22
5 min.	o Tell the participants that across the top of this sheet are the same communicators they saw on Worksheet 2. Down the left-hand column have been added the consumers of information about the district.	
	o Each person will mark this worksheet in different ways in order to analyze the communication patterns of his/her own district. Tell them they will have an opportunity later on to share with their group what they have discovered.	
	o Give instructions as follows:	
	Step 1: After completing and adjusting Worksheet 2 you made a priority list. Write the number of each item from that list in the appropriate box at the top of the sheet. At the end of this exercise you may reconsider your rankings.	
	Step 2: Note that some extra spaces are provided at the top and down the left side so that you might localize your work. At the top you might want to name some special persons whom you consider to be quality communicators; then go down the column to match them with certain consumers.	
	Step 3: On the left you might want to name opinion leaders or special groups unique to your district; now match them with your most effective insiders.	

Step 4: The focus now is on the points at which the communicators meet the consumers and the relationships implied in those matches. Place a check (✓) in the corner of any boxes to show who you would prefer to have giving information to what consumers in your district. You may check more than one box across any one row.

Step 5: Place a large "S" in any boxes to say you are now satisfied with the quality of communication taking place in those relationships in your district.

Step 6: Place a big "U" in any boxes to say you are now unsatisfied with the quality of communication taking place in those relationships in your district.

Step 7: Place the letter "P" at any intersection you believe should be governed by local board policy.

- You should have, at this point, a basic profile of your district's communications network and a general sense of present conditions as you see them. What does it mean?

15 min.

- Tell the group they have 15 minutes to individually complete Worksheet 3, page 17.

Participant Booklet Page 17

TIME		MATERIALS
o	When it looks as though most of the participants have completed Worksheet 3, tell the group to turn to the "Followup Instructions for Worksheet 3" on page 18 of their workbook. Review the key points with the group, which are indicated below.	Participant Booklet Page 18

— Circle any box in which you've placed both a check (✓) and a "U." A check says you would prefer to have a particular communicator give information to a specific class of consumers, and yet you are not satisfied with the job being done. Even though you might be able to guess why there's a problem and to say what might be done to improve matters, it is enough at this time to have identified some priority needs for discussion by your board.

— Now go back to the top of the page and locate your "number one" communicator from Worksheet 2 and then scan down the column. By inference, you should be able to do two things: verify your rating, and judge whether the performance meets your expectation. Do the same with each column in the order of your original ranking. The analysis chart should provide you with a foundation for future planning.

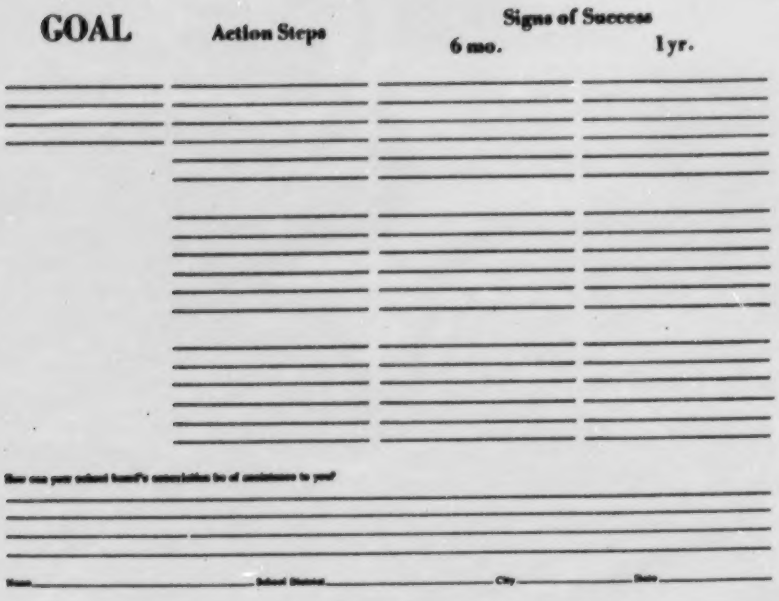
— As you begin your plan, you will want to keep in mind how limited financial resources must be allocated in the face of unlimited needs. Consider the human resources, too. Take another look at the way you've marked Worksheet 3 and answer this question: Have you asked more of some communicators than you have of others—even more than they can possibly deliver?

— We believe that, given the proper information in the right form and with the opportunity, all of the insiders can be significant contributors to a total communications system.

— As your group finishes, you might like to share your analysis with a neighbor or the group.

TIME		MATERIALS
	Activity 7: Planning Goal	Worksheet 4
	Leader Focus: The purpose of this section is to move the participants from an analysis stage to a planning phase. Participants should take home a personal plan of action that they as individuals can implement to improve communication with the community or school.	
5 min.	o Lecturette: At this point you should remind the participants that:	
	— THE PEOPLE ELECT INDIVIDUALS (YOU) TO THE BOARD--INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS DO HAVE A COMMUNICATION RESPONSIBILITY.	
	— MOST PEOPLE FEEL IT'S EASIER TO COMMUNICATE WITH SOMEONE THEY KNOW.	
	— EVERY BOARD MEMBER ACTING AS AN INDIVIDUAL CAN DO SOMETHING TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE SCHOOL.	
	— EVERY BOARD MEMBER MUST REMEMBER, HOWEVER, THAT INDIVIDUAL ACTION DOES NOT REPRESENT OFFICIAL BOARD ACTION.	
	o Leader Instructions: Now inform the participants that the last phase of the workshop is to help them build an individual plan of action to be implemented in their home district.	
	Instruct the participants that in this exercise they may work as individuals, in pairs or in groups. Each participant is to:	
	— Read down the "Board" column on Worksheet 3 and select the point at which an individual project might do the most good.	Participant Booklet Pages 20-22
	— Read pages 20-22 in his/her workbook, Techniques for Communicating with the Community.	
	— Select or make up one or two ideas that he/she can take back to his/her district and put into action.	

TIME			MATERIALS
5 min.	o	You may wish to demonstrate how one of the projects might be selected and written on the GOAL chart, page 19 of the workbook. Use Transparency CC 23 for this demonstration.	Participant Booklet Page 19 Trans. CC 23



Definitions

Goal: A general statement of what the participant wants to happen

Action Steps: The things, the actions, the work the board member is going to do to make the goal happen

Signs of Success: The things or the events that should take place at six months and one year that indicate the goal is being reached.

TIME		MATERIALS
20 min.	o Inform the participants they have 20 minutes to complete this exercise and that you will call on some selected individuals to share their projects.	
	o At the end of the exercise, allow some time for selected reports. Also pick up a copy of the GOAL chart which should be returned to the state school boards association office.	
	o End the workshop with a few summary remarks. Encourage each of the participants to go back to their districts and do something as an individual to improve communication.	

TIME		MATERIALS
Total Time: 10 min.	Activity 8: Evaluation	
	Leader Focus: The purpose of evaluating the workshop is to gain feedback from the participants about the quality of the presentation and your effectiveness as a leader. This feedback can be a valuable tool in refining both your professional skills and the workshop presentation.	
	o Leader Instruction: Tell the participants to turn to pages 24-25 of their workbook and complete the workshop critique.	Evaluation Forms Pages 24-25
	o Tell the participants they have 10 minutes to complete the form.	

SECTION 4: EVALUATING THE WORKSHOP*

Evaluation is the hallmark of a professional--good teacher or workshop leader. A systematic planned evaluation is the only method we have to determine the effectiveness of our instruction and the achievement of the learners. This program was developed around four techniques of development and evaluation.

Topic teams and state review committees identified the goals of the workshop, and in some cases, the techniques. In addition, pilot tests, field tests and expert reviews were used at appropriate times during the development and evaluation phases.

*A summary report of evaluative procedures and results is on file in the Rural Education Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 300 S. W. Sixth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204.

SUMMARY REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Topic Team

The Oregon component of the school board inservice program was responsible for the development of three topics: (1) Policy Making, (2) Communicating with the Community, and (3) Evaluation. The Executive Director of the Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA), Mr. Tom Rigby, appointed one OSBA staff member to work with each topic: Mrs. P. Fitzwater, Policy; Mr. J. Marten, Evaluation; and Mr. D. Dixon, Communicating with the Community. Mr. Rigby also appointed representative school board members and superintendents to serve on each topic committee.

State Review Committee

In addition to the topic teams made up of school board members and superintendents, Mr. Rigby appointed and convened a State Review Committee. The purpose of the State Review Committee was to provide a forum for the involvement of opinion leaders from allied educational agencies. In attendance at the meeting on January 24, 1979 were:

Mr. Tom Rigby, Executive Director, OSBA
Mrs. Pat Fitzwater, Training and Policy Specialist, OSBA
Dr. Milt Baum, Oregon Department of Education
Dr. Wright Cowger, Willamette University, Professor and school board member
Dr. Ron Petrie, Dean, School of Education, Portland State University
Dr. Jens Robinson, Superintendent, Woodburn, Oregon
Dr. Ray Mullen, Superintendent, Tillamook Educational Service District
Mrs. Carol Williams, board member and President of OSBA
Dr. Betty Tomblin, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Dr. Leslie Wolfe, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

The State Review Committee made five recommendations:

1. The inservice programs should help clarify the role of the school board in public education.

2. The inservice programs need to emphasize the proactive role that can be played by an informed school board member.

3. The inservice programs must emphasize the dynamics that take place between board members, between the board and the superintendent, and between the community and the board.

4. The inservice programs must also be targeted to superintendents. The inservice materials should help create a dialogue between superintendents and school board members relative to their working relationship in a democracy.

5. The inservice programs should be developed on several levels which should include materials that a superintendent can use with prospective or existing school board members.

Topic Team Explorations

The topic Communicating with the Community was first identified by this project's Policy Board. In turn, the Policy Board appointed a "topic team" composed of five school board members and three superintendents to outline the goals of the inservice package Communicating with the Community. After five meetings the topic team unanimously agreed that they wanted a program that would be action oriented, one that would prepare the participants to go back to their communities ready to take action. The topic team further agreed that the program should attempt to create a positive attitude about the need for a planned and evaluated communications program, emphasizing the public's right to information about the schools.

The Communicating with the Community topic team composed of eight members held five meetings from January 1979 through June 1979. The topic team identified the concepts that should be included in the workshop:

- The inservice program should not be a typical public relations approach to communicating with the community.
- The program must present an analysis of the communication process between the schools and the community, the board and the community, and the board and the professional staff.
- The inservice program should emphasize things school board members can do individually and as a total board that will help improve the communication process.

Developmental Review

A number of people participated in the initial review of the materials. The topic team reviewed the first draft materials and activities at its last meeting in June 1979.

Pilot Test Activities

	Place	Date	No. of Participants	Presenter
1.	Anchorage, Alaska	Nov. 1979	101	Wolfe
2.	Helena, Montana	Nov. 1979	113	Wolfe
3.	Rigby, Idaho	Feb. 1981	100	Wolfe

Summary of Pilot Test Activities

Evaluation Methodology

The package in its original pilot test form was tested in two states with a total of 214 people, of whom 90 percent were school board members. The pilot test in the original two states employed a "pretest-treatment-posttest" format. The participants were informed that the materials were in a pilot test form and that we would like their cooperation and their evaluations. All of the participants agreed to complete a pre-workshop questionnaire and a post-workshop questionnaire. A seven-point semantic differential scale was used to assess pre-workshop and post-workshop attitudes about the following concepts:

- Communication is a two-way process
- The public has a right to know
- Communication is everybody's responsibility
- The communication system is planned and evaluated

Two additional perceptions were assessed on a posttest-only questionnaire, using a five-point Likert-type scale:

- Evaluation of the workshop experience
- Impression of the workshop presenter

In addition to the above structured assessments, the participants were asked to respond to an open-ended statement on the post-workshop questionnaire: "I would like to suggest the following idea to help improve the workshop: _____."

The results of pre- and post-workshop evaluations for all participants are presented in Table 1 of this document. Table 2 presents the data from only the school board members. The responses to the open-ended statement are not presented in this document, but they were used in adjusting certain parts of the pilot test workshop.

TABLE 1

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Pilot Test Summary

Number Attending: 113
Number of completed pre- and post-workshop forms received: 96
Length of session: 1-1/2 hours

Semantic Differential	Means - Respondents		Difference
	Pre	Post	Pre to Post
Communication is a two-way process			
(1) Bad - Good (7)	6.06	6.33	+.27
(1) Weak - Strong (7)	5.88	5.99	+.11
The public has a right to know			
(1) Negative - Positive (7)	6.11	6.19	+.08
(1) Weak - Strong (7)	5.77	5.97	+.20
Communication is everybody's responsibility			
(1) Negative - Positive (7)	6.26	6.49	+.23
(1) Light - Heavy (7)	5.87	6.18	+.31
Communications system is planned and evaluated			
(1) Bad - Good (7)	5.16	5.63	+.47
(1) Weak - Strong (7)	4.84	5.32	+.48
Scale 1 = low, 7 = high			
Evaluation of workshop experience (post only)		4.03	
Impression of workshop presented (post only)		4.42	
Scale 1 = low, 5 = high			

TABLE 2

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Pilot Test Summary

Number of school board members attending: 101
Number of completed pre- and post-workshop forms received: 91
Length of session: 1-1/2 hours

Semantic Differential	Means - Respondents		Difference
	Pre	Post	Pre to Post
Communication is a two-way process			
(1) Bad - Good (7)	5.86	6.46	+.60
(1) Weak - Strong (7)	5.61	6.11	+.44
The public has a right to know			
(1) Negative - Positive (7)	5.90	6.40	+.50
(1) Weak - Strong (7)	5.61	5.96	+.35
Communication is everybody's responsibility			
(1) Negative - Positive (7)	6.22	6.57	+.35
(1) Light - Heavy (7)	5.78	6.11	+.33
Communications system is planned and evaluated			
(1) Bad - Good (7)	5.22	5.89	+.67
(1) Weak - Strong (7)	4.64	5.54	+.90
Scale 1 = low, 7 = high			
Evaluation of workshop experience (post only)		4.00	
Impression of workshop presented (post only)		4.41	
Scale 1 = low, 5 = high			

Typical Comments

Typical comments in response to open ended questions ranged as follows:

- Excellent--we need to spend more time on this subject
- Now I have some ideas about things I can do as an individual board member
- I wished the entire school board were here

Expert Review

The third and final review of the material was conducted on two levels, one by the National School Boards Association and a second and independent evaluation by Dr. Keith Goldhammer of Michigan State University. The materials and procedures at this level were reviewed and evaluated for the following:

1. Their representation of the existing basis of knowledge in the literature and the profession
2. The procedures and methods outlined in the workshop and leader's guide

Field Tests

Field tests were defined as the occasions when the workshop was delivered by a person other than a member of the NWREL staff. This workshop has been delivered in five states by five different association staff people to more than 400 school board members and superintendents.

Changes

A number of changes evolved as the workshop was evaluated and reviewed. The most dramatic change was the expansion of the "visuals" to the "lecture" part of the workshop and the addition of the "questionnaires" that can be used by the board members.

The recommended changes from the pilot tests, field tests and expert reviews have been incorporated in this product.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Workshop Critique

In order to improve the workshop, we would appreciate your time in answering the following questions. Feel free to make comments regarding any item.

1. Did this workshop cover what it was advertised to cover?

No		Somewhat		Yes
1	2	3	4	5

If not, what was missing that you expected to cover? _____

_____

2. Do you feel that the content of this workshop will be of help to you as a school board member?

No		Somewhat		Yes
1	2	3	4	5

3. Is there one (or more) specific action(s) you can take back to your district concerning communicating with the community?

Definitely Not		Somewhat		Definitely Yes
1	2	3	4	5

Can you name one? _____

_____

4. Was adequate time allowed for questions and discussion during the presentation?

No		Somewhat		Yes
1	2	3	4	5

5. Please state one thing you learned or gained from the session:

_____

_____

6. What questions remain unanswered for you regarding communicating with the community?

_____

_____

7. Relative to workshops you have attended, how do you rate this workshop?

Very Poor				Very Good
1	2	3	4	5

8. How would you rate the overall performance of the leader--knowledge and presentation?

Very Poor				Very Good
1	2	3	4	5

9. Are you:

____ A school board member
____ A superintendent
____ Other: please state _____

10. What can the leader do to improve the session?

11. Any additional comments for improving this and future workshops will be appreciated.

THE SCHOOL BOARD, THE COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION*
AN ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The right question raised in the proper forum has the power to make rational to the public what boards and their superintendents do on behalf of teaching and learning—that is to say, in the interest of children and youth. And no question is really a bad question when a board member asks it in a genuine effort to find out about matters of managment, policy, and curriculum and instruction. Once a superintendent and staff deliver an answer satisfactory to the board, someone must decide who has a need to know about the response and how the information will get to its intended audience intact and in a form that ordinary human beings can understand.

In addition, not all questions and sources of information reside solely within the arena governed by a board—the schools, the district office, and the board meeting room. Because school systems operate in the context of broader social, political, and economic environments, they must use and be responsive to what those other constituencies have to offer in the support and improvement of education. How can a school district tap those rich resources of information and assistance and still retain its integrity without becoming a mere satellite in the larger community system?

The communications required of a management team (board, superintendent and administrative staff) must be a coherent, visible and consistent system for handling the flow of information about what is done in the name of education. The needs of the school and the needs of the community must be an integral part of the communications function. How do schools go about the business of communicating?

Between the asking of a question and the giving of an answer, there must be a process of finding out. This booklet outlines one process board members and superintendents may use in deciding how to act in response to two basic questions:

1. How can a board best communicate to the community the needs, interests, and transactions of the schools?

2. How can the needs and interests of the community be communicated most effectively to the schools?

Out of the process should come a <u>system</u> for communicating with anyone who has a need to know. And these are questions about action—making the public presence felt in the school system and making the educational presence felt in the community without compromising either genuine public need or the integrity of the schools.

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*Wolfe, Leslie, Ed.D. School Board Inservice Project, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon, 1981.

The board, as agent of the state, and the superintendent, as agent of the board, share the complex task of making sense to an extraordinary variety of audiences--and not always under the best of circumstances or with as much advance notice as one would like. It is therefore risky to assume that communication of the sort we talk about is a "public relations program"--being good and getting credit for it, or dominating the space and time of the public media, although that, too, counts for something.

Consider first the range of audiences with which boards directly or indirectly communicate. A brief catalogue tells the story: the superintendent and the management staff; certificated and classified employees and their unions; students, their parents, and other patrons; board advisory committees, official school-level organizations, and local special-interest groups; business and industry; the media; and governmental agencies represented by everyone from the local mayor to the Secretary of the Department of Education. Given that each audience has its own peculiar interests, requirements, and purposes, who then speaks for the schools and in what fashion?

Districts which suffer confidence crises, gaps in understanding, and public relations failures are generally those that have yet to find and maintain the critical balance between board purposes and the real or apparent interests of those several other publics; troubled districts are frequently unprepared to do much more than react to whatever besiegers are at the gates. A district in the habit of forecasting its public stance is, more often than not, capable of acting and responding rather than reacting. In short, those districts have tailored to their specific purposes a well defined, clearly organized, and readily manageable communications system. They have come to terms with who they are, how they want to act, and how they wish to be perceived.

Consider, then, some important reasons for making the development of a communications program a first priority:

- The characterization of a district, like the formation of our own reputations, is out of its hands in the absence of a systematic program for the release of important information. It is no secret that the force of succulent rumors comes first. What means does a board have for communicating over specific issues or preparing to deal with information about potential problems?

- A basic assumption: the public, especially parents, is truly interested in what goes on in teaching and learning. What do they want to know and how do we go about telling them?

- The schools and the public are bound in a delicate relationship over matters of money. How can a board portray the district's financial needs (meaning program needs) and the superintendent's stewardship?

- Although the elected board legally represents and acts on behalf of the electorate, it has a continuous need to know whether its views reflect those of the community. How can those views be pooled and refined to become essential parts of public policy?

- From time to time it is important for a board to assess the performance of the district and its several functions. What plans and practices are there for finding out and then telling others how we're doing?

- District policies govern the dimensions of management decisions, but boards are often removed from day-to-day transactions, particularly those that affect the district's employees. What procedures and practices exist for informing employees on matters they have a need to know about?

- Certain matters of information are confined to the requirements of the management team (board, superintendent, administrators). How and over what matters do the board, superintendent, and field administrators communicate that differs from public communication?

Answers to each of these questions will suggest directions a district may take in the process of formulating a total system for managing district communications.

One further matter to consider: Even at those critical or embarrassing moments when board members wish it could be otherwise, the public does indeed have a right to know. Each board must understand, if not accept, the public right and need for information about its policies, its actions, and details of its educational and business operations. How must a district prepare itself to manage this responsibility?

SPOKESPERSONS AND INTERPRETERS*

Ben Brodinsky

"The people of your school district regard you as the board of education 24 hours a day," says a briefing pamphlet for newly elected board members distributed by the California School Boards Association. "Your telephone will resound with their educational hopes and frustrations."

Board members' phones also resound with the hopes and frustrations of the professional educator.

We come here to a third cluster of boardsmanship functions: to make the public presence felt in the educational establishment and, in turn, to make the educational presence felt in the community. The board of education must see, on the one hand, that public needs and wishes are respected and protected in the educational bureaucracy and, on the other, that education and its integrity are protected among people.

The zealot in the classroom or in administration can be as damaging to children as the zealot in the community. Educators must not be allowed to take over, or take in, the public; and activist parents and taxpayers must not be allowed to take over, or take in, education.

The board of education is strategically placed to bring about interaction between the educational establishment and the community for the ultimate benefit of children and youth.

The process of refereeing and attending to the needs of educators and the public is not well understood by America's school boards. The job is seldom desired or accepted, nor is it generally well executed when it is attempted.

Donald R. Gallagher of Glassboro (New Jersey) State College reminds us that "there was a time in education when a school district made few attempts to communicate with its community. The philosophy was, 'Don't tell them anything, because they don't understand education; and what's more, they're not interested.'"

More citizens now want to know about their schools, and more boards are willing to tell them. But a large percentage of America's school boards still prefer to remain silent. They do so either because they don't like "publicity," don't have the resources, don't have the skills, or don't see the need for a public relations or public information program. When the schools are in trouble, or when a bond issue is to be sold, officials do run to the press or begin to turn out "informational leaflets" on the district's educational achievements. Sporadic, disjointed forays rather than continuing and coordinated efforts are characteristic of our country's school public relations.

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*Brodinsky, Ben. Spokespersons and interpreters. In Brodinsky, B. How a School Board Operates. Bloomington, IN: The Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1977. Used by permission.

Selling the Schools to the Public

Less than a hundred school districts employ full-time public relations experts. The remaining districts use whatever personnel or resources can be put to the task; often the superintendent himself, a principal, or even a teacher performs the public relations function.

The sophisticated school public relations practitioner does his work under any one of a series of labels, such as director of community relations, educational communications, school/community coordination, or public information. The part-time worker is likely to see his goal more simply as "selling the schools to the people." There is a respectable literature on this subject; techniques, strategies, approaches, and media are constantly being refined and developed.

News releases, feature stories, photographs of school children, newsletters, and promotional pamphlets and leaflets are among the staples of school public relations activity. The more ambitious district finds ways to use radio, television, and speakers' bureaus to tell the school's story. The theme of these media is usually, "See how good we are. . . ." Rarely do such public relations ventures succeed in explaining, interpreting, and building understanding of the educational process or the resources needed to get adequate—let alone "quality"—education. And this despite years of effort. For more than 25 years, the National School Public Relations Association (now in Arlington, Virginia) has labored in this field, seeking to upgrade the services of the full-time public relations specialist and guiding the part-time or auxiliary worker.

Results have been uneven at best. In some communities the people understand and value what the schools are doing and feel the presence and worth of their schools and the people who run them. But more frequently there is alienation between the schools and the public; there are confidence crises, gaps in understandings, and public relations failures.

George Gallup, the public opinion expert, sheds light on this subject. His annual surveys of public attitudes toward public schools (published by Phi Delta Kappa) reveal large stretches of ignorance among the people about their schools. Substantial percentages of the people, the Gallup organization concludes, have little information or inaccurate information about their school boards, their administrators, and what the schools are doing or achieving.

On the assumption that public relations failures can be cured by more public relations, Gallup made the following statement to an audience of board members at the 1974 convention of the National School Boards Association:

> My first suggestion is that you establish friendly relations with the press. The more understanding that repoters and editors have of your problems, the more likely they are to give their readers or viewers the same understanding.

The press, however, is not the best vehicle for telling the public just what the functions and responsibilities of school boards are. This task you will have to do yourself. And one suggestion for accomplishing this is to make certain that every household in your school district at least once a year receives a letter which spells out in detail these functions.

The same letter can perform a dual function: Tell citizens what your responsibilities are and at the same time and in the same letter elicit their views. This will provide some evidence that you are actually trying to represent all of the people and not a clique, as is sometimes charged. . . .

If each month one-ninth of all households receives a letter of the kind I have suggested, then for each of the nine school months you will be receiving suggestions, praise, and criticism that can be summarized for press releases.

And now one more suggestion. I would assign one person on the school staff to collect each month examples and evidence of achievement in the classroom. The public is interested, in fact hungry, for news that reports the good things that are happening in our schools. . . .If each week there is a success story in the press, this will go a long way toward offsetting the news that reflects adversely on the school system.

Selling the Public to Education

The people have something of value to contribute to educational goals and practices. The educationist may not believe this. Hence he will resist or even ridicule the people's ideas and wishes—until the fires break out, the protests roar, the explosions come, the confrontations in which the educators are usually the losers reach violent proportions.

The fact that the people "own" the schools is not the sole reason for making certain that the public presence is felt in the educational establishment. As in any establishment, educators become victims of the cancer of bureaucracy. They want to spend more and more money for programs only they can justify. They claim access to secret wisdom. They adopt we-know-more-than-you attitudes. They use a lingo that baffles and frustrates the parent and the citizen—and often misleads them, willfully or not. They develop programs, activities, and course offerings which common sense from common people would reject on sober review. Dick and Jane would have shorter lives, the excesses of either phonics or look-see methods would have been curtailed, and any aberrations of so-called progressive or traditional education would have been controlled if the wisdom of laypersons had penetrated more deeply into the educational establishment.

This is work for the board of education, and, again, it is a task not well understood, desired, or accepted by the community. Effective boards, however, succeed in bringing about interaction between the specialist's ideas and the ideas of the community, tempering the ambitions of educators without squelching their enthusiasm or underutilizing their expertise.

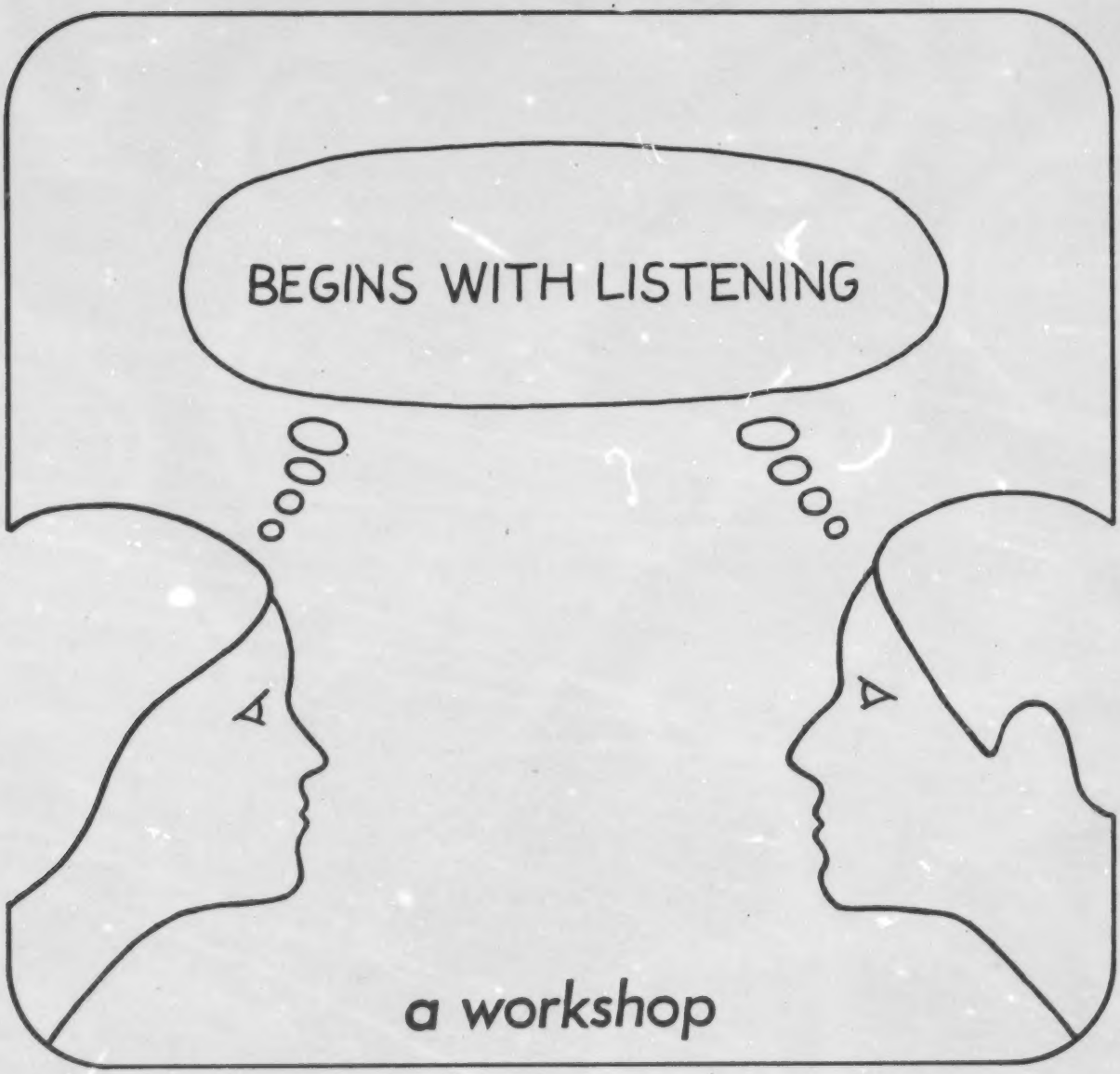
The board can do this by keeping in constant communication with members of the administration and the faculty. Internal newsletters are useful. The board can use other media as well to tell the staff what people want, think, and need. Local public opinion polls and the deliberations of citizens' advisory committees are useful in this task. When drastic measures are needed to enforce the point of view of the layperson, the board can use its powers to fire, control expenses, or lop off undesirable activities through its budgetary process.

More happily, the board can make the public presence felt in the educational establishment through creative processes: 1) its policy-making function and 2) its management of the board of education meeting.

COMMUNICATION

developed by

Leslie G. Wolfe, Ed.D



THE SCHOOL BOARD, THE COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION*
AN ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS

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OBJECTIVES

1. The participants' attitude about their individual ability to have an effect on the community communication process will improve.

2. The participants' attitude about the need to have a planned and evaluated communication process will become more positive.

3. The participants will increase their background knowledge of the research in the community communication process.

4. Each participant will go back to his/her district with a plan that he/she can as an individual put into action.

WORKSHEET 1A*

SCHOOL BOARDS GALLUP POLL

Directions: You should answer these questions the same way you think the average person in your district might respond.

1. Can you name at least one action taken by this district's school board in the past year or so? If so, what?

_____

_____

2. How much effort does the school board in this district make to keep parents and other interested citizens informed of its activities? Circle one.

   a. Great deal
   b. Fair amount
   c. Little or none
   d. Don't know

3. Suppose you were to disagree with a decision made by this district's school board or school administration. In such a case, how likely do you think it is that the school board would seriously consider an appeal to reconsider that decision? Circle one.

   a. Very likely
   b. Fairly likely
   c. Not too likely
   d. Don't know

4. In your opinion, how good a job does the school board in this district do when it comes to representing the views and opinions of people like yourself? Circle one.

   a. Excellent
   b. Good
   c. Fair
   d. Poor
   e. Don't know

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*National School Boards Association Research Report Number 1975-1. The People Look at Their School Boards. Copyright © 1975. Used by permission.

5. What is the role of the school board in this district? Circle one.

   a. Sets policies and goals, and runs the schools
   b. Sets policies and goals, but does not run the schools
   c. Gives advice, only with no real power of its own
   d. Don't know

6. What is the overall rating of local school boards? Circle one.

   a. Favorable
   b. Unfavorable
   c. Don't know

7. Which groups are <u>most</u> knowledgeable, supportive or active regarding school boards? Name one.

   _____

8. Which groups are <u>least</u> knowledgeable, supportive or active regarding school boards? Name one.

   _____

9. How are people likely to find out about the board's activities? Name three.

   _____

   _____

   _____

WORKSHEET 1B*

PHI DELTA KAPPA SCHOOLS

Directions: You should answer these questions the same way you think the average person in your district might respond.

1. What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools in this community must deal? Name two or three.

_____

_____

2. What grade would you give the public schools here? Circle one: A, B, C, D, FAIL.

3. What are the sources of information you use to judge the quality of schools in your community; that is, where do you get your information about the schools? Name one or more.

_____

_____

_____

4. What is your best source of information about the schools? Name at least one.

_____

_____

5. Would you like to know more about the schools in this community? Circle one: Yes No.

6. What kind of information would be of particular interest to you? Name one or more.

_____

_____

*Phi Delta Kappan, Inc. Copyright © 1978. Used by permission.

7. Have you attended any lecture, meeting or social occasion in any local school building during the last year? Circle one: Yes No.

8. In your opinion, what are the main things a school has to do before it can earn an A? Name one or more.

_____

_____

_____

9. Have you attended any lecture, meeting or social occasion in any local school building during the school year? Name one.

_____

_____

10. In your opinion, should or should not parents be asked to meet with school personnel before each new school semester to examine the grades, test scores, and career goals for each child and to work out a program to be followed both in school and at home? Circle one: Yes No.

11. How much confidence do you have in these American institutions to serve the public needs:

	Great Deal	Fair Amourt	Very Little
Church	_____	_____	_____
Public Schools	_____	_____	_____
Courts	_____	_____	_____
Local Government	_____	_____	_____
State Government	_____	_____	_____
Labor Unions	_____	_____	_____
Big Business	_____	_____	_____

12. Who should decide what is taught in the schools?

a. Federal government
b. State government
c. Local school board
d. Don't know

COMMUNICATORS

WORKSHEET 2

Instructions

Turn to page 10 of your workbook. Across the top of Worksheet 2 you will notice ten classes of people who generate information and impressions about the schools. They share two things in common: they are inside the system (as managers, employees, or clients) and they report to people outside the system. They give the public information on behalf of the district, accurate or not, and whether we want them to or not.

Along with this worksheet each group has been given control of certain district resources (tokens).

Each person should spend his/her communications resources (the tokens) where he/she thinks they will do the most good in the district.

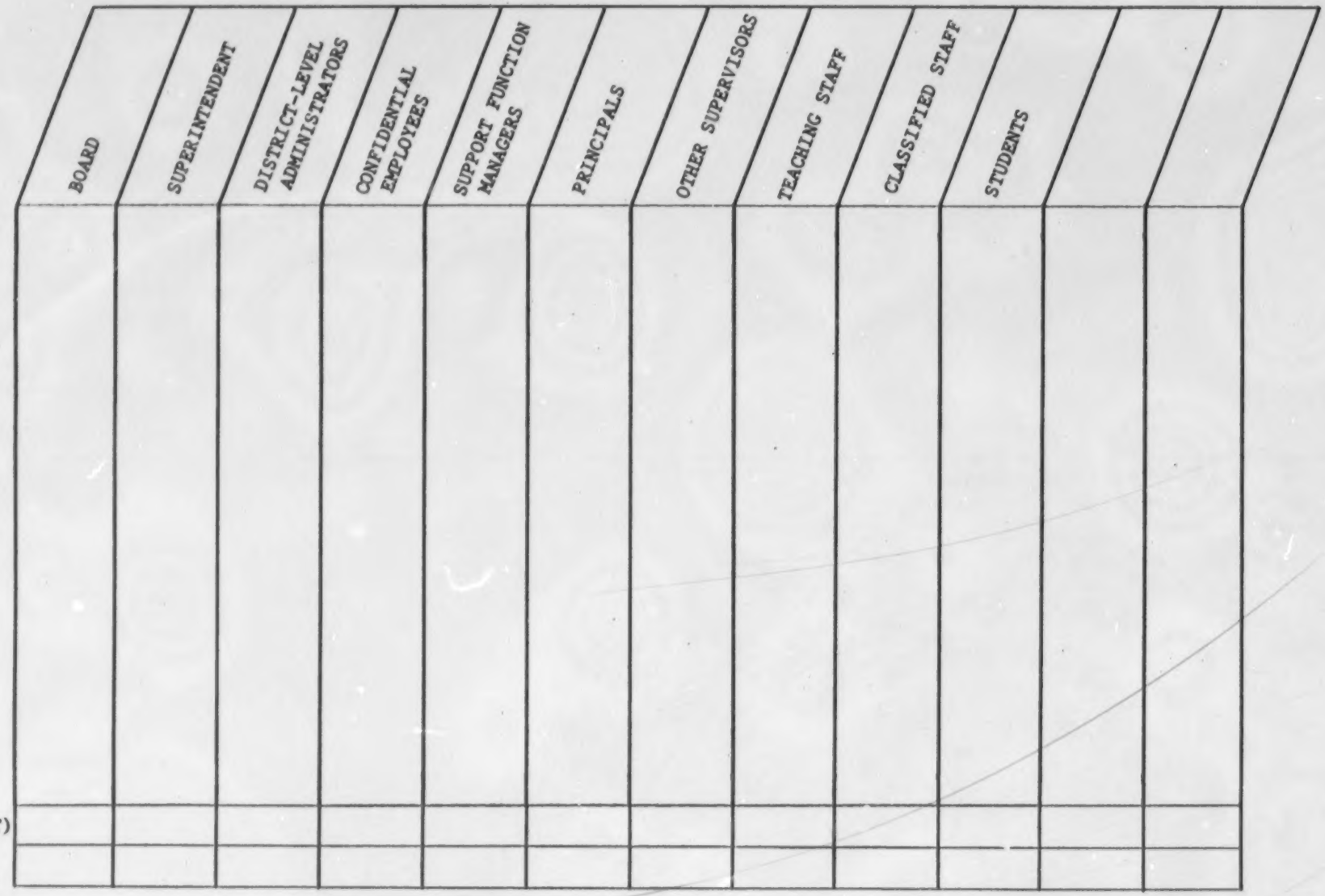
- Each member of the group should place a token in the column he or she identifies as "preferred communicator" and briefly explain why that choice was made.

- There may be some positions listed on the Communicators Worksheet 2 that some school districts do not have; for example, "Other Supervisors." If this is the case, draw a line through the position or add to the list if you desire.

- Worksheet 2 should be passed around to each group member twice. In other words, each group member should have two opportunities to rate the relative importance of the communicators.

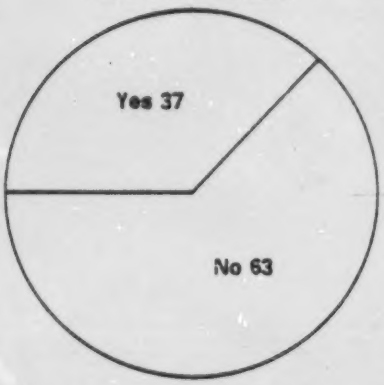
WORKSHEET 2

COMMUNICATORS



Can you name at least one action taken by this district's school board in the past year or so?

% OF ALL ADULTS



A1

How much effort does the school board in this district make to keep parents and other interested citizens informed of its activities?

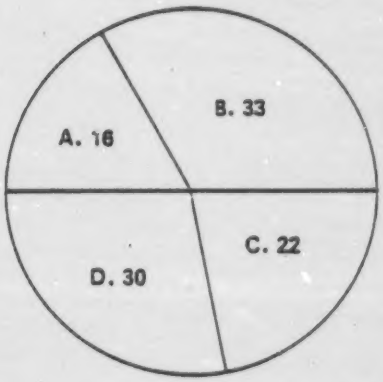
% OF ALL ADULTS

A. Great deal

B. Fair amount

C. Little or none

D. Don't know



A2

Suppose you were to disagree with a decision made by this district's school board or school administration. In such a case, how likely do you think it is that the school board would seriously consider an appeal to reconsider that decision?

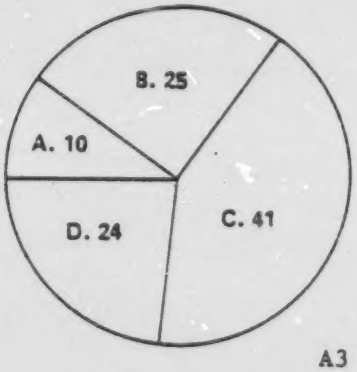
% OF ALL ADULTS

A. Very likely

B. Fairly likely

C. Not too or not at all likely

D. Don't know



A3

In your opinion, how good a job does the school board in this district do when it comes to representing the views and opinions of people like yourself?

% OF ALL ADULTS

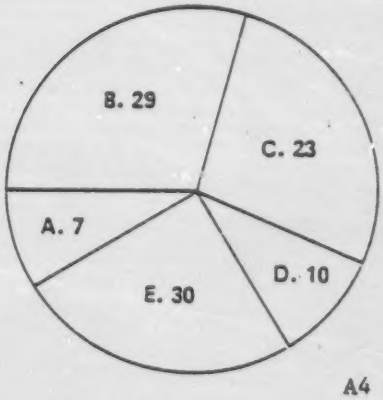
A. Excellent

B. Good

C. Fair

D. Poor

E. Don't know



A4

What is the role of the school board in this district?

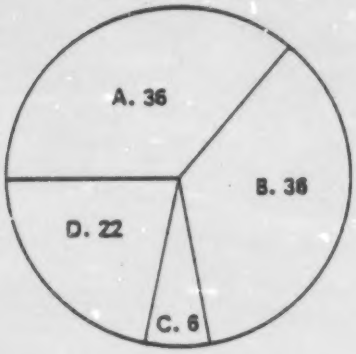
A. Sets overall policies and goals and also runs the schools

B. Sets overall policies and goals but does not actually run the schools

C. Gives advice only with no real power of its own

D. Don't know

% OF ALL ADULTS



A5

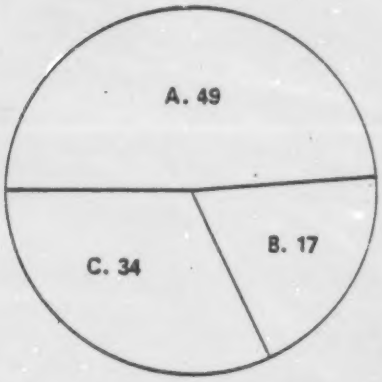
Overall rating of local school boards.

A. Favorable

B. Unfavorable

C. Don't know

% OF ALL ADULTS



A6

Those groups most knowledgeable, supportive, or active regarding school boards:

Parents of public school children

College educated people

Residents of households with employed head of household

People aged 35-49

Residents of small communities

People served by elected boards

Midwesterners

Men

A7

Those groups least knowledgeable, supportive, or active regarding school boards.

Non-parents of public school children

Grade school educated people

Residents of non-labor-force households

People aged 50 and older

Residents of large communities

Westerners

Women

A8

How are you most likely to find out about this district's school board's activities?

	% OF ALL ADULTS
Newspaper, TV, radio	60
Friends, neighbors	32
School board newsletter	22
PTA, other parent groups	17
Your children's comments and reports	17
Attending school board meetings	11
Other children's comments and reports	8
Other	1
Don't know	11

A9

PARENTS SHOULD MEET WITH TEACHERS TO EXAMINE GRADES, TEST SCORES

	Public School Parents (%)	National (%)
Yes	83	84
No	14	11
Don't Know	3	5

A10

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS (1980)

	Great Deal (%)	Fair Amount (%)	Very Little (%)
Church	42	40	18
Public Schools	29	46	25
Courts	19	45	28
Local Government	19	51	23
State Government	17	52	24
Federal Government	14	47	31
Labor Unions	17	38	30
Big Business	13	42	36

A11

PROBLEMS OF SCHOOLS

	Public School Parents (%)	National Totals (%)
Lack of Discipline	26	26
Use of Drugs	12	14
Poor Curriculum	10	11
Integration	11	10
Need Good Teachers	7	6

B1

RATINGS OF SCHOOLS

Grade	National Totals (%)	Those Who Have Attended School Affair (%)
A	8	11
B	26	41
C	30	35
D	11	7
F	7	2
No Answer	18	2

B2a

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Word of Mouth	98	58	70
Local Newspaper	33	38	37
School Publications	12	5	7
Local Radio	3	7	5

B4

SEVEN YEAR RATING OF SCHOOLS

	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974
A	10	8	9	11	13	13	18
B	25	26	27	26	29	30	30
C	29	30	30	28	28	28	21
D	12	11	11	11	10	9	6
FAIL	6	7	8	5	6	7	5
DON'T KNOW	18	15	19	14	13	20	

B2

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Students	58	35	43
Newspapers	33	42	38
School Board/Faculty	45	24	33
Parents of Students	35	31	33
Other Adults	22	24	23

B3

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOLS?

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Yes	64	45	54
No	31	44	38

35

IF YES, WHAT??

- Curriculum
- Qualification of Teachers
- Current Teaching Methods
- About Administration
- Discipline
- Finance
- Extracurricular activities
- Academic Ratings

B6

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL FUNCTION

	YES	NO	CAN'T RECALL
1979	13	84	3
1969	37	59	4

B7

HOW CAN SCHOOLS EARN AN A

Improve Teachers	23%
Increase Discipline	20%
Set Standards	17%
Individual Attention	16%
Three R's	12%

B8

WAYS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC RESPECT FOR THE SCHOOLS

- Lectures
- Meetings
- Social Events

B9

WORKSHEET 3:

COMMUNICATIONS ANALYSIS

Instructions

Across the top of this sheet are the same communicators you saw on Worksheet 2. Down the left-hand column we have added the consumers of information about the district.

Your Task

Each person will mark this worksheet in different ways in order to analyze the communication patterns of your own district. You will have an opportunity later on to share with your group what you have discovered.

Step 1: After completing and adjusting Worksheet 2 you made a priority list. Write the number of each item from that list in the appropriate box at the top of the sheet. At the end of this exercise you may reconsider your rankings.

Step 2: Note that some extra spaces are provided at the top and down the left side so that you might localize your work. At the top you might want to name some special persons whom you consider to be quality communicators; then go down the column to match them with certain consumers.

Step 3: On the left you might want to name opinion leaders or special groups unique to your district; now match them with your most effective insiders.

Step 4: The focus now is on the points at which the communicators meet the consumers and the relationships implied in those matches. Place a check (✓) in the corner of any boxes to show who you would prefer to have giving information to what consumers in your district. You may check more than one box across any one row.

Step 5: Place a large "S" in any boxes to say you are now satisfied with the quality of communication taking place in those relationships in your district.

Step 6: Place a big "U" in any boxes to say you are now unsatisfied with the quality of communication taking place in those relationships in your district.

Step 7: Place the letter "P" at any intersection you believe should be governed by local board policy.

You should have, at this point, a basic profile of your district's communications network and a general sense of present conditions as you see them. What does it mean?

WORKSHEET 3

COMMUNICATIONS ANALYSIS CHART

✓ Preferred mode
P There is a policy
S The communication is satisfactory
U The communication is unsatisfactory

		BOARD	SUPERINTENDENT	DISTRICT-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS	CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYEES	SUPPORT FUNCTION MANAGERS	PRINCIPALS	OTHER SUPERVISORS	TEACHING STAFF	CLASSIFIED STAFF	STUDENTS		
INTERNAL	BOARD												
	SUPERINTENDENT												
	ADMINISTRATORS												
	TEACHING STAFF												
	THEIR UNION												
	OTHER STAFF												
	THEIR UNION												
	STUDENTS												
EXTERNAL/LOCAL	PARENTS												
	OTHER PATRONS												
	ADVISORY COMMITTEES												
	SCHOOL-LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS												
	SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS												
	BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY												
	NEWSPAPERS												
	RADIO/TV												
	LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES												
	ORGANIZATIONS												
	OTHER AGENCIES												
EXTERNAL/OTHER	REGIONAL EDUCATION AGENCIES												
	OTHER REGIONAL AGENCIES												
	STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES												
	OTHER STATE AGENCIES												
	FEDERAL EDUCATION AGENCIES												
	OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES												
	SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATIONS												

FOLLOWUP INSTRUCTIONS FOR WORKSHEET 3

Circle any box in which you've placed both a check (✓) and a "U." A check says you would prefer to have a particular communicator give information to a specific class of consumers, and yet you are not satisfied with the job being done. Even though you might be able to guess why there's a problem and to say what might be done to improve matters, it is enough at this time to have identified some priority needs for discussion by your board.

Now go back to the top of the page and locate your "number one" communicator from Worksheet 2 and then scan down the column. By inference, you should be able to do two things: verify your rating, and judge whether the performance meets your expectation. Do the same with each column in the order of your original ranking. The analysis chart should provide you with a foundation for future planning.

As you begin your plan, you will want to keep in mind how limited financial resources must be allocated in the face of unlimited needs. Consider the human resources, too. Take another look at the way you've marked Worksheet 3 and answer this question: Have you asked more of some communicators than you have of others—even more than they can possibly deliver?

We believe that, given the proper information in the right form and with the opportunity, all of the insiders can be significant contributors to a total communications system.

As you finish, you might like to share your analysis with a neighbor or the group.

WORKSHEET 4

GOAL	Action Steps	Signs of Success 6 mo.	1 yr.

How can your school board's association be of assistance to you?

Name _____ School District _____ City _____ State _____

TECHNIQUES FOR COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

- Plan talks to community groups about the schools. Have a 3-5 minute response that can be adapted to any question.
- Hold briefings and tours for realtors and salespersons.
- Hold meetings with other elected officials and opinion leaders on a regular basis. Be specific; name the people.
- Develop with your board a slogan or theme for your schools--or your district.
- Develop an outdoor bulletin board...marquee...to "advertise" things that are happening in classrooms.
- Create a program to recognize the contributions of parents...a letter to graduates...a welcome letter to new parents...for extra service...for caring.
- Establish a plan to call on new residents about schools. But be sure you do your homework.
- Create a staff recognition for years of service to the schools and the community.
- Spend time visiting classrooms.
- Plan meetings in neighborhoods about those areas of parent and community concern--discipline, instruction in the basics, etc.
- Create a curriculum calendar--for parents or in the newspapers--to let them know "when" specific things are being taught...fractions, long vowels, etc.
- Develop a method to communicate with the non-parent population: items for church newsletters; talks for organizations to which they belong; etc.
- Increase the number of school events you attend.
- Increase your knowledge of what's happening in schools--via regular briefings by the superintendent and others.
- Create a class on public education in the schools' curriculum--for a day or a quarter.
- Develop a staff recognition day for years of service to the schools and to the community.

- Develop a policy to begin each board meeting with "good news" of schools.
- Send letters to the parent of each newborn child in your community, congratulating them and letting them know there's a place reserved in the schools for that newest of all new students--five years from now.
- Write letters to parents of high school graduates that is tucked inside the diploma, giving congratulations on the pride they must feel--the credit due for making that event possible--recognizing the "partnership with parents."
- Develop a policy that will recognize the contributions of <u>all</u> staff in some way during board meetings.
- Get the facts out...based on what the public wants to know, not what we want to tell.
- Start a letters to the editor campaign.
- Develop a plan to go after the non-parent groups.
- Get a dozen reasons from each school on why education is good in your system. Use it for speeches, agenda items, newsletters, etc.
- Take time to communicate with students that is open and honest.
- Start a program of demonstration classes for parents and other citizens...in new subject areas, etc.
- Systematically survey your community periodically to stay in touch.
- Start a communications advisory committee that is active and involved.
- Provide assistance for social studies classes in a study of the functions of a school board.
- Create a program for PR training of all the staff. It affects what people think of a board and the job it is doing.
- Develop a clear, easily understood policy that reflects the board's commitment to communication.
- Start a program to listen to staff members--informally or through surveys--to learn what they do know, want to know and need to know about their schools and the district.
- Help create an employee newsletter. Misunderstanding comes from misinformation or a lack of information. You can help employees understand the "why" of board actions.

- Develop some clearly-defined ways of hearing from irate parents or citizens...and from employee union representatives...when they contact you via telephone--and when they address the board.
  - Refrain from making commitments...until you are acting as a body.
  - Realize you may be misquoted--or taken out of context.
  - Stay objective...without reacting defensively.
- Analyze your board meeting agendas. What do you spend your time on--July 1 through June 30??? That's what you stand for.
- Make the board room environment as physically attractive and inviting as possible (comfortable chairs, room temperature, ash trays, coffee, carpeting).
- Plan ways to exhibit student work at each meeting.
- Talk with and distribute agendas to key people in the community.
- Schedule meetings with neighborhood groups (afternoon and evening).
- Have a special bulletin containing highlights of each board meeting out and in the hands of all staff members, key citizens, and media people the next day.
- Invite special groups to have representatives attend board meetings--taxpayers' associations, PTA, LWV, etc. Be sure they are introduced when they first attend--and spoken to at each meeting. Tell them you're glad they've come.
- Start a program to recognize outstanding programs and practices in the schools. Have the staff members responsible at the meetings and introduce them publicly.
- Recognize the community contributions of citizens, especially those who have been involved in the schools. Send official letters of congratulations to each.
- Send a followup letter to every community patron who addresses the board. Thank them for their interest and, if possible, give them further information about their topic.
- Have coffee available to the public.
- When you have a break in the meeting, go into the audience and speak to the public.

COMMUNICATION IS A TWO WAY PROCESS: CRITICAL CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS*

1. Communication is a two way process:

   - o The school board must be in a position to communicate the community's needs to the educators, and
   - o The school board needs to communicate the school organization's needs to the public.

2. There are a number of people in the school system who communicate with the community. Who are these people? Are they included in the district's plan?

3. The board has the responsibility to insure that a planned, organized and evaluated communications program is a part of the district's policy.

4. The characterization of a district is out of its control in the absence of a systematic program for the release of important information. What means does a board have for communicating over specific issues or preparing to deal with information about potential problems?

5. A basic assumption: the public, especially parents, is truly interested in what goes on in teaching and learning. What do they want to know and how does the school board go about telling them?

6. The schools and the public are bound in a delicate relationship over matters of money. How can a school board portray the district's financial needs (program needs) and the school board's stewardship?

7. Although the elected school board legally represents and acts on behalf of the electorate, it has a continuous need to know whether its views reflect those of the community. How can those views be pooled and refined to become essential parts of public policy?

8. From time to time it is important for a board to assess the performance of the district and its several functions. What plans and practices are there for finding out and then telling others how we're doing?

9. District policies govern management decisions, but boards are often removed from day-to-day transactions, particularly those that affect the district's employees. What procedures and practices exist for informing employees on matters they have a need to know about?

10. Certain matters of information are confined to the requirements of the management team (board, superintendent, administrators). How and over what matters do the board, superintendent, and field administrators communicate that differs from public communication?

11. Even though an individual board member has no authority other than from the combined action of the board, each board member is still an elected representative. How can you as an individual best represent the needs of the community and the needs of the school? Do you have a plan for improving your representative and communication process?

---

*Wolfe, Leslie G., Ed.D. School Board Inservice Project, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon, March 1982.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Workshop Critique

In order to improve the workshop, we would appreciate your time in answering the following questions. Feel free to make comments regarding any item.

1. Did this workshop cover what it was advertised to cover?

No		Somewhat		Yes
1	2	3	4	5

If not, what was missing that you expected to cover? _____

_____

2. Do you feel that the content of this workshop will be of help to you as a school board member?

No		Somewhat		Yes
1	2	3	4	5

3. Is there one (or more) specific action(s) you can take back to your district concerning communicating with the community?

Definitely Not		Somewhat		Definitely Yes
1	2	3	4	5

Can you name one? _____

_____

4. Was adequate time allowed for questions and discussion during the presentation?

No		Somewhat		Yes
1	2	3	4	5

5. Please state one thing you learned or gained from the session:

_____

_____

6. What questions remain unanswered for you regarding communicating with the community?

_____

_____

7. Relative to workshops you have attended, how do you rate this workshop?

Very Poor				Very Good
1	2	3	4	5

8. How would you rate the overall performance of the leader--knowledge and presentation?

Very Poor				Very Good
1	2	3	4	5

9. Are you:

____ A school board member
____ A superintendent
____ Other: please state: _____

10. What can the leader do to improve the session?

11. Any additional comments for improving this and future workshops will be appreciated.

RELATED TRANSPARENCIES

OBJECTIVES

- Convince Participants They Can Make a Difference
- Increase Desire to Have a Planned, Evaluated Communication Program
- Increase Participant Knowledge About Communications
- Develop a Personal Plan of Action

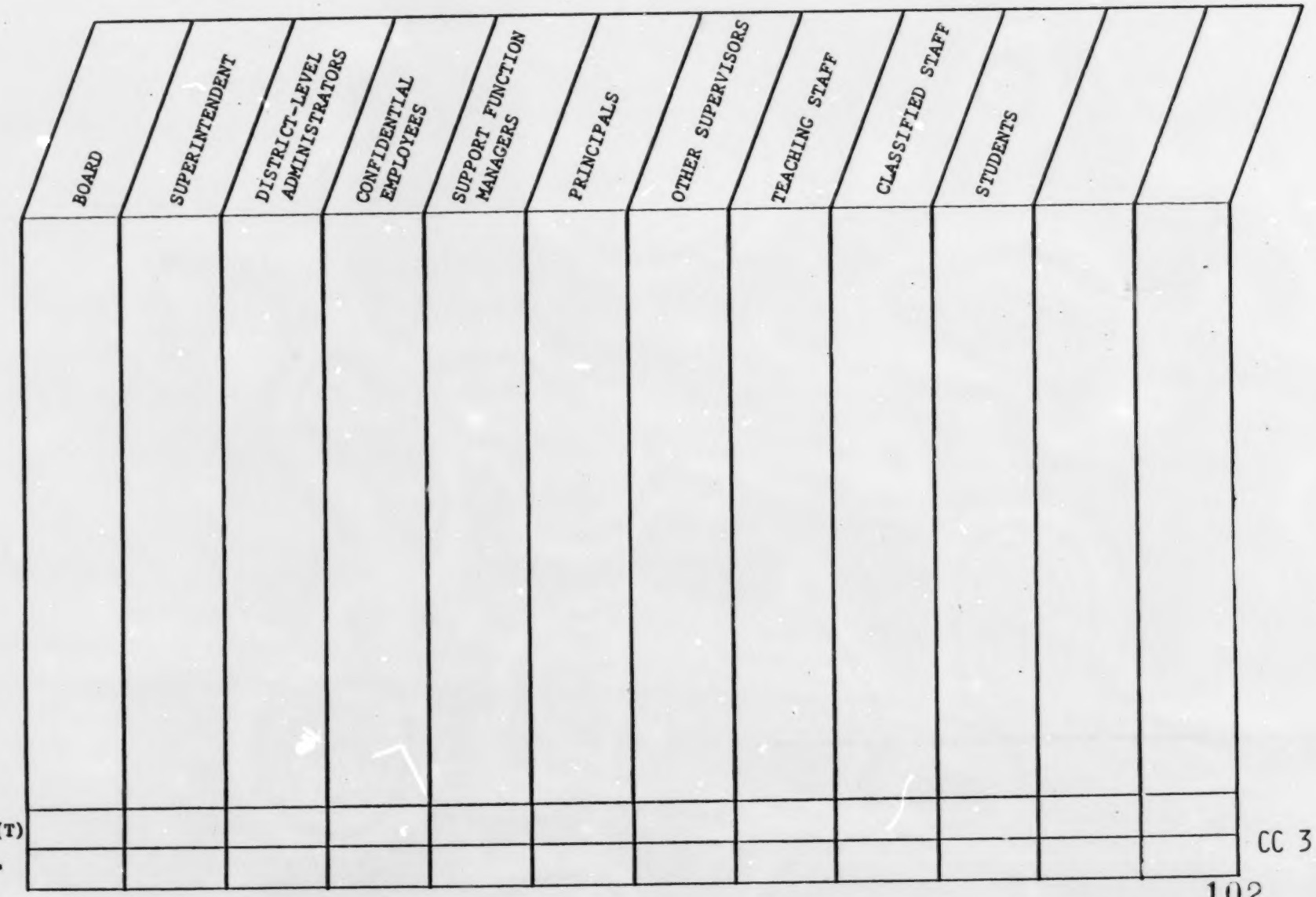
TEN INSIDERS

- Board
- Superintendent
- District Administrators
- Confidential Employees
- Support Staff
- Principals
- Counselors, etc.
- Teachers
- Students
- Others??

CC 2

WORKSHEET 2

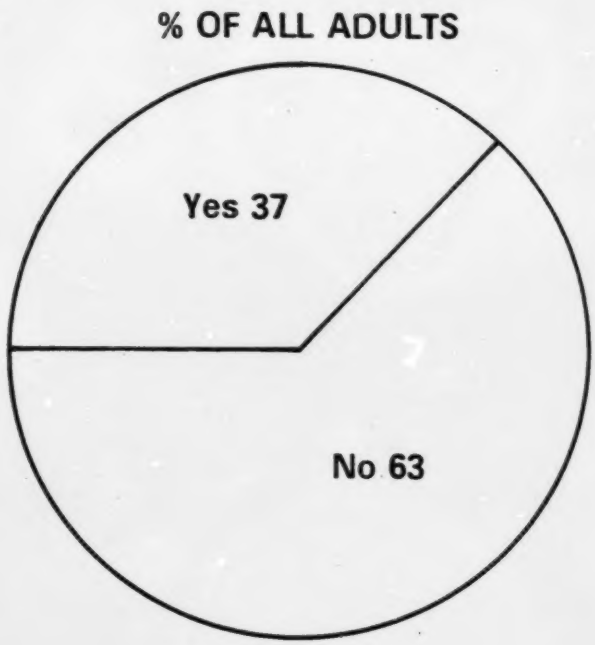
COMMUNICATORS



CC 3

The People Look at their School Boards

Can you name at least one action taken by this district's school board in the past year or so?



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CC 4

The People Look at their School Boards

How much effort does the school board in this district make to keep parents and other interested citizens informed of its activities?

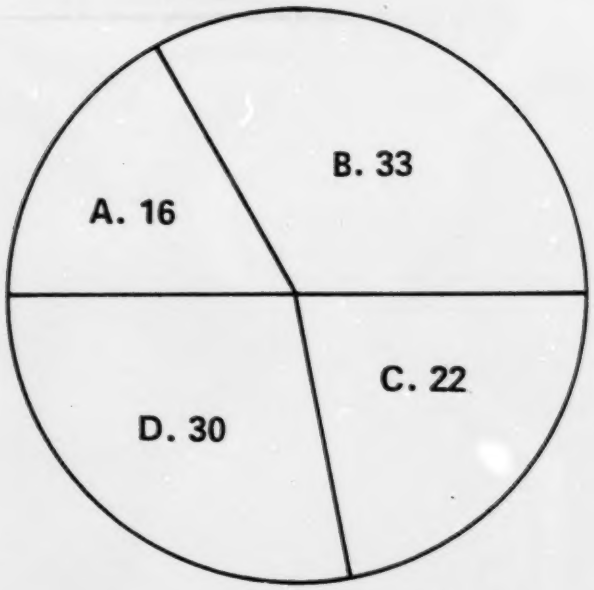
% OF ALL ADULTS

A. Great deal

B. Fair amount

C. Little or none

D. Don't know



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CC 5

The People Look at their School Boards

Suppose you were to disagree with a decision made by this district's school board or school administration. In such a case, how likely do you think it is that the school board would seriously consider an appeal to reconsider that decision?

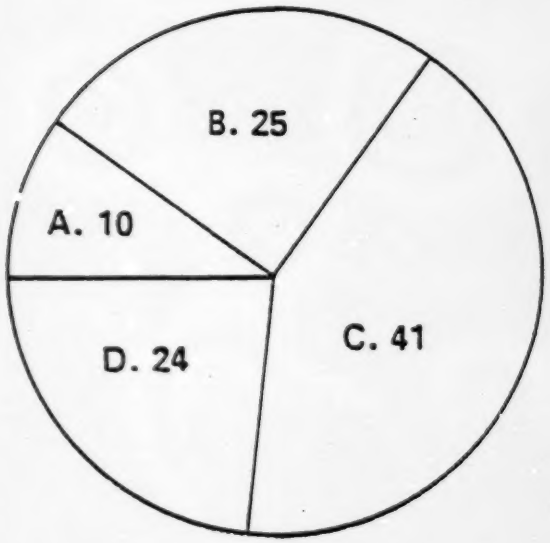
% OF ALL ADULTS

A. Very likely

B. Fairly likely

C. Not too or not at all likely

D. Don't know



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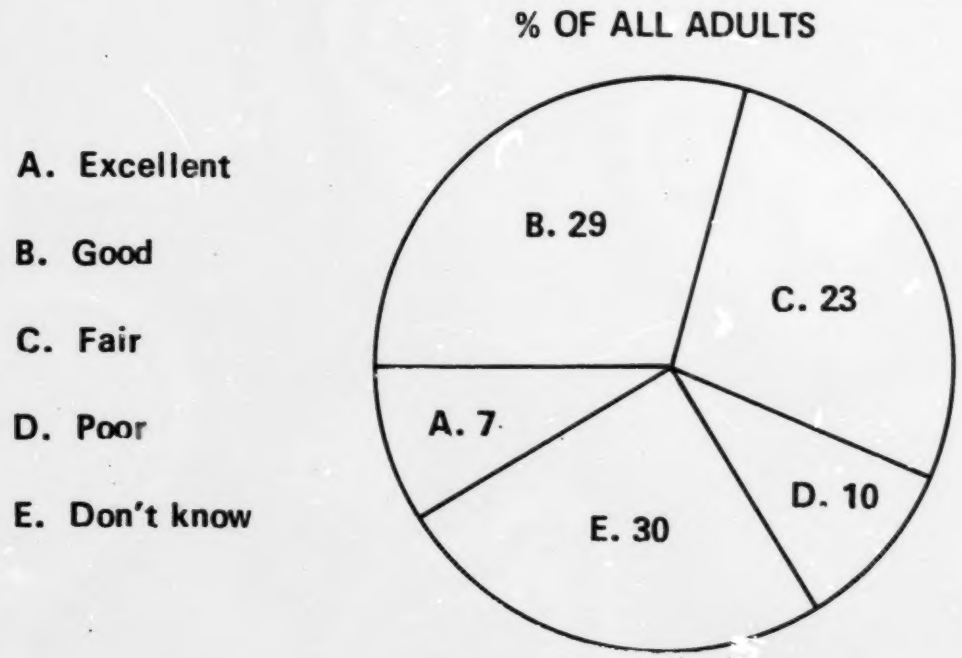
CC 6

The People Look at their School Boards

In your opinion, how good a job does the school board in this district do when it comes to representing the views and opinions of people like yourself?



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CC 7

The People Look at their School Boards

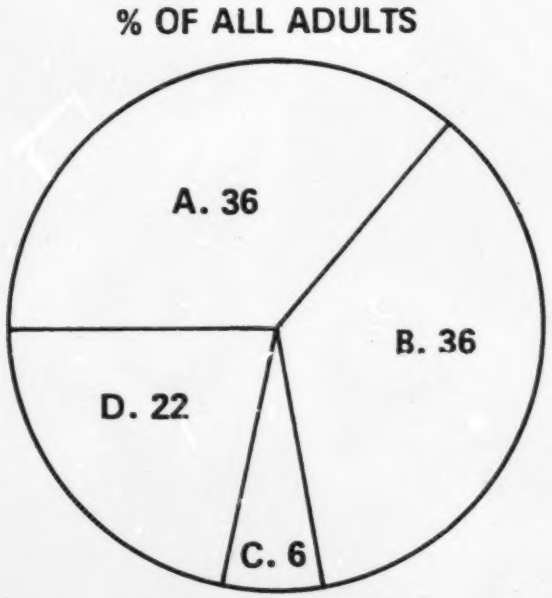
What is the role of the school board in this district?

A. Sets overall policies and goals and also runs the schools

B. Sets overall policies and goals but does not actually run the schools

C. Gives advice only with no real power of its own

D. Don't know



CC 8

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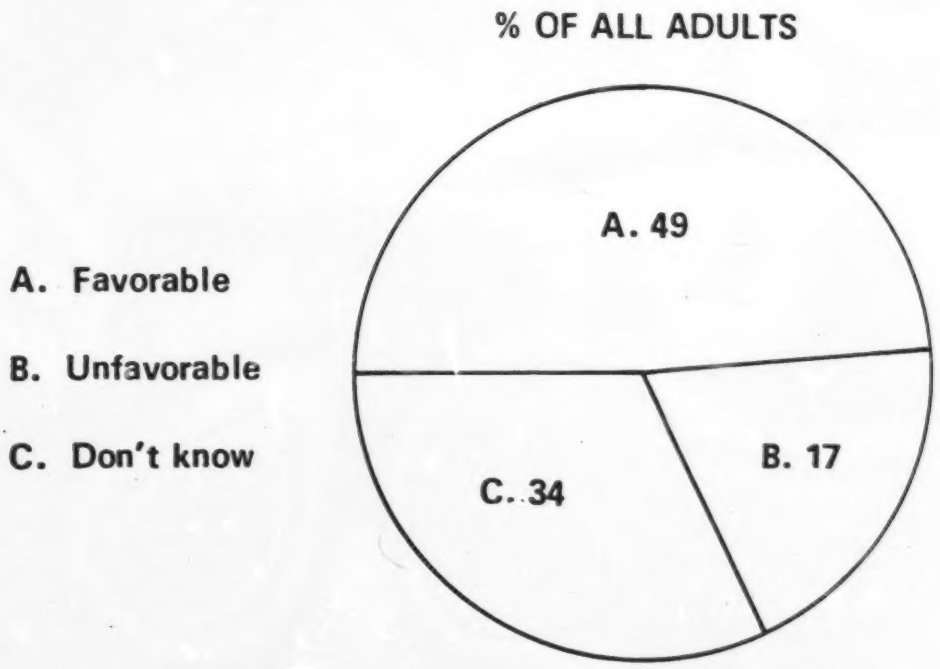
The People Look at their School Boards

Overall rating of local school boards.



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CC 9

The People Look at their School Boards

Those groups most knowledgeable, supportive, or active regarding school boards:

Parents of public school children

College educated people

Residents of households with employed head of household

People aged 35-49

Residents of small communities

People served by elected boards

Midwesterners

Men

Those groups least knowledgeable, supportive, or active regarding school boards.

Non-parents of public school children

Grade school educated people

Residents of non-labor-force households

People aged 50 and older

Residents of large communities

Westerners

Women

CC 10

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The People Look at their School Boards

How are you most likely to find out about this district's school board's activities?

	% OF ALL ADULTS
Newspaper, TV, radio	60
Friends, neighbors	32
School board newsletter	22
PTA, other parent groups	17
Your children's comments and reports	17
Attending school board meetings	11
Other children's comments and reports	8
Other	1
Don't know	11

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CC 11

PROBLEMS OF SCHOOLS

	Public School Parents (%)	National Totals (%)
Lack of Discipline	26	26
Use of Drugs	12	14
Poor Curriculum	10	11
Integration	11	10
Need Good Teachers	7	6

CC 12

SEVEN YEAR RATING OF SCHOOLS

	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974
A	10	8	9	11	13	13	18
B	25	26	27	26	29	30	30
C	29	30	30	28	28	28	21
D	12	11	11	11	10	9	6
FAIL	6	7	8	5	6	7	5
DON'T KNOW	18	15	19	14	13	20	

CC 13A

RATINGS OF SCHOOLS

Grade	National Totals (%)	Those Who Have Attended School Affair (%)
A	8	11
B	26	41
C	30	35
D	11	7
F	7	2
No Answer	18	2

CC 13B

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Students	56	35	43
Newspapers	33	42	38
School Board/Faculty	45	24	33
Parents of Students	35	31	33
Other Adults	22	24	23

CC 14

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Word of Mouth	98	58	70
Local Newspaper	33	38	37
School Publications	12	5	7
Local Radio	3	7	5

CC 15

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOLS?

	Parents (%)	Non-Parents (%)	Total (%)
Yes	64	45	54
No	31	44	38

CC 16A

IF YES, WHAT??

- Curriculum
- Qualification of Teachers
- Current Teaching Methods
- About Administration
- Discipline
- Finance
- Extracurricular activities
- Academic Ratings

CC 16B

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL FUNCTION

	YES	NO	CAN'T RECALL
1979	33	64	3
1969	37	59	4

CC 17

HOW CAN SCHOOLS EARN AN A

Improve Teachers	23%
Increase Discipline	20%
Set Standards	17%
Individual Attention	16%
Three R's	12%

CC 18

WAYS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC RESPECT FOR THE SCHOOLS

- Lectures
- Meetings
- Social Events

CC 19

PARENTS SHOULD MEET WITH TEACHERS TO EXAMINE GRADES, TEST SCORES

	Public School Parents (%)	National (%)
Yes	83	84
No	14	11
Don't Know	3	5

CC 20

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS (1980)

	Great Deal (%)	Fair Amount (%)	Very Little (%)
Church	42	40	15
Public Schools	28	46	20
Courts	19	45	28
Local Government	19	51	23
State Government	17	52	24
Federal Government	14	47	31
Labor Unions	17	38	30
Big Business	13	42	36

CC 21

WORKSHEET 3

COMMUNICATIONS ANALYSIS CHART

✓ Preferred mode
P There is a policy
S The communication is satisfactory
U The communication is unsatisfactory

		BOARD	SUPERINTENDENT	DISTRICT-LEVEL ADMINISTRATORS	CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYEES	SUPPORT FUNCTION MANAGERS	PRINCIPALS	OTHER SUPERVISORS	TEACHING STAFF	CLASSIFIED STAFF	STUDENTS		
INTERNAL	BOARD												
	SUPERINTENDENT												
	ADMINISTRATORS												
	TEACHING STAFF												
	THEIR UNION												
	OTHER STAFF												
	THEIR UNION												
	STUDENTS												
EXTERNAL/LOCAL	PARENTS												
	OTHER PATRONS												
	ADVISORY COMMITTEES												
	SCHOOL-LEVEL ORGANIZATIONS												
	SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS												
	BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY												
	NEWSPAPERS												
	RADIO/TV												
	LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES												
	ORGANIZATIONS												
	OTHER AGENCIES												
EXTERNAL/OTHER	REGIONAL EDUCATION AGENCIES												
	OTHER REGIONAL AGENCIES												
	STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES												
	OTHER STATE AGENCIES												
	FEDERAL EDUCATION AGENCIES												
	OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES												
	SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATIONS												

CC 22

GOAL	Action Steps	Signs of Success 6 mo.	1 yr.

How can your school board's association be of assistance to you?

Name _____ School District _____ City _____ State _____